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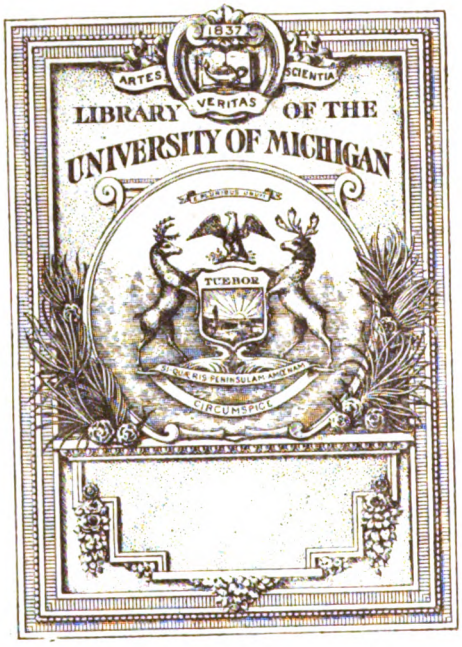
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THE

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An Illustrated Monthly

Vol. LII

JULY TO DECEMBER

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1916

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THE STRAND MAGAZINE

JUL 3 1916
OF MICH.

THE BATTLE OF THE MARNE and the GERMAN RETREAT

Vividly Described
—BY—
CONAN DOYLE

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THE GREAT RETREAT OF THE GERMAN ARMY FROM THE BANKS OF THE RIVER MARNE.

"THE BATTLE OF THE MARNE WAS THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE DAYS OF THE GREAT NAPOLEON THAT A PRUSSIAN ARMY HAD BEEN TURNED AND DRIVEN"

(*See page 14.*)

The BRITISH CAMPAIGN IN FRANCE.

The Facts at Last!

The Inside Story of the War.

By A. CONAN DOYLE.

CHAPTER III.

THE BATTLE OF THE MARNE.

The General Situation—"Die Grosse Zeit"—The Turn of the Tide—The Battle of the Ourcq—The British Advance—Cavalry Fighting—Forcing the Rivers—The 1st Lincolns and the Guns—Sixth Brigade's Action at Hautvesnes—Ninth Brigade's Capture of Germans at Vinly—The Problem of the Aisne—Why the Marne is One of the Great Battles of All Time.

THE GENERAL SITUATION.

THERE are several problems connected with the strategical opening of the great war which will furnish food for debate among military critics for many years to come. One of these already alluded to, is the French offensive taken in Alsace and Lorraine. It ended in check in both cases, and yet its ultimate effects in confusing the German plans and deflecting German armies which might have been better used elsewhere may be held to justify the French in their strategy.

Another remarkable and questionable move now obtrudes itself, this time upon the part of the Germans. Very shortly after the outbreak of war, the Russians had pushed their covering armies over the frontier of East Prussia, and had defeated a German force at Gumbinnen, with a loss of prisoners and guns. A few days later the left wing of the widespread, and as yet only partially mobilized, Russian army struck heavily at the Austrians in the south near Lemberg, where after a week of fighting they gained a great victory, with prisoners, which amounted to over seventy thousand men and a large booty of

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guns and supplies. Before this blow had befallen their cause, and influenced only by the fact that the Russian right wing was encroaching upon the sacred soil of the Fatherland, a considerable force was detached from the invading armies in France and dispatched to the Eastern front. These men were largely drawn from the Third (Saxon) Army of Von Haussen. Such a withdrawal at such a time could only mean that the German general staff considered that the situation in France was assured, and that they had still sufficient means to carry on a victorious invasion. Events were to show that they were utterly mistaken in their calculation. It is true that, aided by these reinforcements, Von Hindenburg succeeded on August 31st in inflicting a severe defeat upon the Russians at the battle of Tannenberg, but subsequent events proved that such a victory could have no decisive result, while the weakening of the armies in France may have had a permanent effect upon the whole course of the war. At the very moment that the Germans were withdrawing troops from their Western front the British and French were doing all they could to thicken their own line of resistance, especially by the transference of armies from Alsace and the south. Thus the net result was that, whereas the Germans had up to August 25th a very marked superiority in numbers, by the beginning of September the forces were more equal. From that moment the chance of their taking Paris became steadily more and more remote.

The first month of the war represented a very remarkable military achievement upon the part of Germany. In her high state of preparation as compared with the Allies, it was to be expected that the beginning of hostilities would be all in her favour, but the reality exceeded what could have been foreseen. Her great armies were ready to the last button. Up to the eve of war the soldiers did not themselves know what their field uniform was like. At the last moment two millions of men filed into the depots and emerged in half an hour clad in grey, with new boots, equipment, and every possible need for the campaign. On her artillery surprises she set special store, and they were upon a vast scale. The machine-gun had been developed to an extent unknown by other armies, and of these deadly little weapons it is said that no fewer than fifty thousand were available. From the tiny quick-firer, carried easily by two men upon a stretcher, to the vast cannon with a diameter of sixteen and a half inches at the mouth, taking three railway trucks for its majestic portage, every possible variety of man-killing engine was ready in vast profusion. So, too, was the flying service, from the little Taube to the huge six-hundred-foot Zeppelin. From these latter devices great results were expected which were not destined to materialize, for, apart from reconnaissances, they proved themselves to be machines rather for the murder of non-combatants than for honest warfare.

"DIE GROSSE ZEIT."

Making every allowance for the huge advantage which the nation that *knows* war is coming must always enjoy over those which merely fear that it may come, it would be foolish to deny the vast military achievement of Germany in the month of August. It reflects great credit upon the bravery and energy of her troops, as well as upon the foresight of her organizers and the capacity of her leaders. Though we are her enemies, our admiration would have been whole-hearted were it not for the brutalities which marked her advance both in Poland, in Belgium, and in France. Consider that wonderful panorama of victory which was known all over the Fatherland as "*Die grosse Zeit.*" On August 10th fell the great fortress of Liége, on the 24th the great fortress of Namur, early in September that of Maubeuge, while the smaller strongholds went down as if they were open cities. On August 10th was a considerable victory at Mülhausen, on the 20th the Belgians were defeated at Tirlemont, on the same day Brussels was occupied. On the 22nd the French central army of ten corps was defeated in a great battle near Charleroi, losing, according to the Germans, some twenty thousand prisoners and two hundred guns. On the left flank the Crown Prince's army won the battle of Longwy, taking ten thousand prisoners and many more guns. On August 23rd the Duke of Würtemberg won a battle in the Ardennes. Upon the same date the British were driven from their position at Mons. Upon the 26th they were defeated at Le Cateau. Most of Belgium and the North of France were overrun. Scattered parties of Uhlans made their way to the shores of the Atlantic. The British bases were in such danger that they had to be moved.

Finally, upon the last day of the month, a great battle took place at Tannenberg in East Prussia, in which the Russian invading army was almost completely destroyed. I do not know where in history such a succession of victories is to be found, and our horror of the atrocities of Louvain, Aerschot, Dinard,

and so many other places must not blind us to the superb military achievement.

It was not, it is true, an unbroken series of successes even in the West. The French in the early days won a victory at Dornach in Alsace, and another smaller one at Dinant in the Ardennes. They held the enemy in the neighbourhood of Nancy, fought a fairly equal battle at St. Quentin in taking the pressure off the British at the end of August, and had a success at Guise. These, however, were small matters as compared with the sweeping tide of German victory. But gradually the impetus of the rush was being stayed. Neither the French nor the British lines were broken. They grew stronger from compression, whilst the invaders grew weaker from diffusion. Even as they hoped to reach the climax of their success, and the huge winning-post of the Eiffel Tower loomed up before their racing armies, the dramatic moment arrived, and the dauntless, high-hearted Allies had the reward of their constant, much-enduring valour.

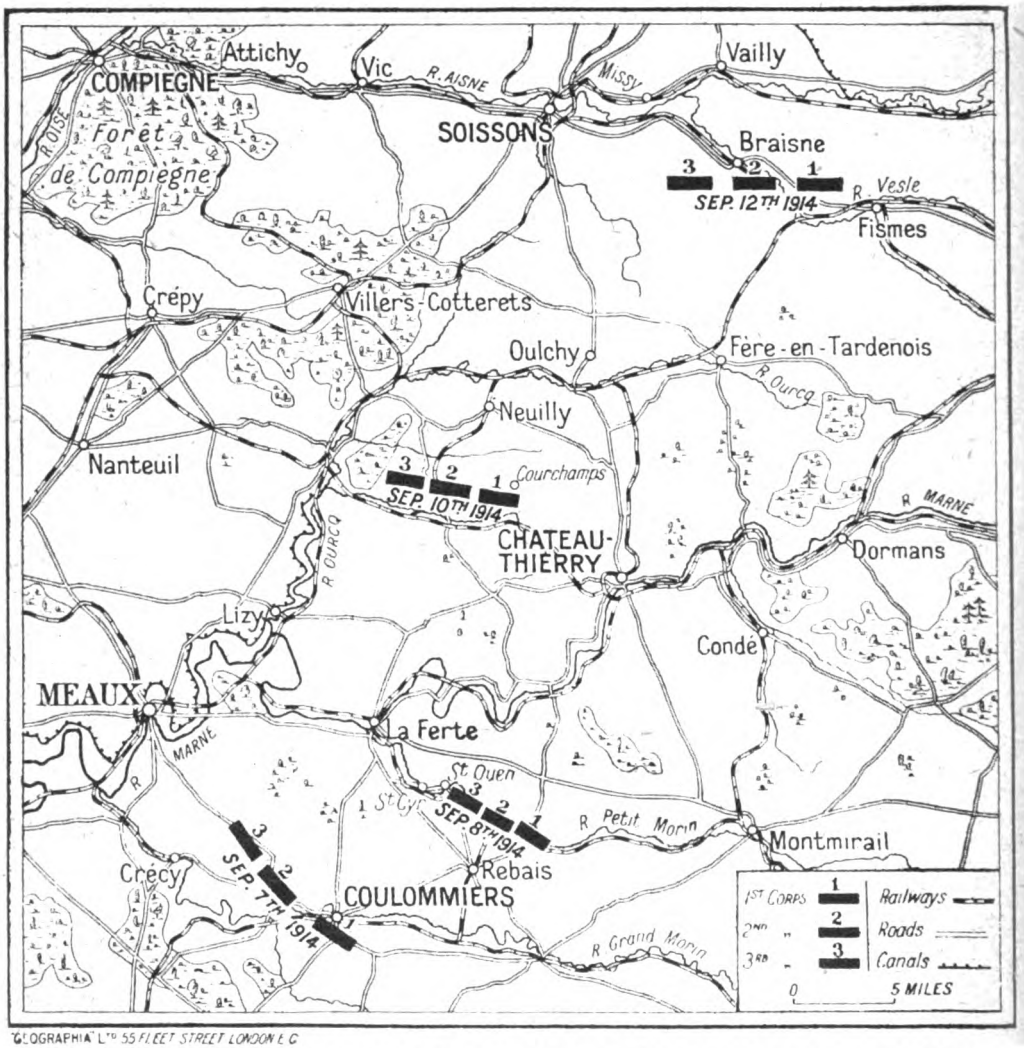
THE TURN OF THE TIDE.

September 6th was a day of great elation in the armies of the Allies, for it marked the end of the retreat and the beginning of their victorious return. It is clear that they could in no case have gone farther south without exposing Paris to the danger of an attack. The French Government had already been transferred to Bordeaux and the city put into a state which promised a long and stubborn defence, but after the surprising rapidity of the capture of Namur there was a general distrust of fortresses, and it was evident that if only one or two of the outer ring of forts should be overwhelmed by the German fire, the enemy would be in a position to do terrible damage to the city, even if they failed to occupy it. The constant dropping of bombs from German aeroplanes, one of which had already injured the Cathedral of Notre Dame, gave a sinister forecast of the respect which the enemy was likely to show to the monuments of antiquity.

Fortunately, the problem of investing Paris while the main French armies remained unbeaten in the field proved to be an insuperable one. The first German task, in accordance with the prophet Clausewitz, was to break the French resistance. Everything would follow after that, and nothing could precede it. Von Kluck, with his army, comprising originally something over two hundred thousand men, had lost considerably in their conflicts with the British, and were much exhausted by rapid marching, but they were still in good heart, as the roads over which they passed seemed to offer ample evidence that their enemy was in full flight before them. Knowing that they had hit the British hard, they hoped that, for a time at least, they might disregard them, and, accordingly, they ventured to close in, by a flank march, on to the other German armies to the east of them, in order to combine against the main line of French resistance and to make up the gaps of those corps which had been ordered to East Prussia. But the bulldog, though weary and somewhat wounded, was still watching with bloodshot eyes. It now sprang suddenly upon the exposed flank of its enemy and got a grip which held firm for many a day to come.

Without going into complicated details of French strategy, which would be outside the scope of this work, it may be generally stated that the whole French line, which had stretched on August 22nd from Namur along the line of the Sambre to Charleroi and had retired with considerable loss before the German advance, was now extended in seven separate armies from Verdun to the west of Paris.

General Joffre had assembled Maunoury's Sixth Army, which consisted of the seventh regular corps, one reserve corps, and three territorial divisions, with Sordet's cavalry, in the neighbourhood of Amiens, and at the end of the month they lay with their right upon Roye. Thus, when Von Kluck swerved to his left, this army was on the flank of the whole great German line which extended to Verdun. Next to this Sixth Army and more to the south-east were the British, now no longer *en l'air*, but with solid French comrades upon either side of them. Next to the British, counting from the left or westward end of the defensive line, was the Fifth French Army under General d'Esperey, of four corps, with Conneau's cavalry forming the link between. These three great bodies, the French Sixth, the British, and the French Fifth, were in touch during the subsequent operations, and moved forward in close co-operation upon September 6th. Their operations were directed against the First (Von Kluck's) and Second (Von Bülow's) armies. On the right of the Fifth French Army came another extra, produced suddenly by the prolific Joffre and thrust into the centre of the line. This was General Foch's Seventh, three corps strong, which joined to the eastward General Langlé de Cary's Fourth Army.



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MAP ILLUSTRATING THE ADVANCE OF THE BRITISH FROM THE MORIN TO THE AISNE.

Opposed to them were the remains of Von Haussen's Third Saxon Army and the Prince of Würtemberg's Fourth Army. Eastward of this, on the farther side of the great plain of Chalons, a place of evil omen for the Huns, were the Third (Serrail), Second (Castelnau), and First (Dubail) French Armies, which faced the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh German, commanded respectively by the Crown Prince of Prussia, the Crown Prince of Bavaria, and General von Heeringen. Such were the mighty lines which were destined to swing and sway for an eventful week in the strain of a close-locked fight.

THE BATTLE OF THE OURCQ.

The eastern portion of this great battle is outside the scope of this account, but it may briefly be stated that after murderous fighting neither the French nor the German lines made any marked advance in the extreme east, but that the Crown Prince's army was driven back by Dubail, Serrail, and Castelnau from all its advanced positions, and held off from Nancy and Verdun, which were his objectives. It was at the western end of the Allied line that the strategical position was most advantageous and the result most marked. In all other parts of that huge line the parallel battle prevailed. Only in the west were the Germans outflanked, and the shock of the impact of the Sixth French Army passed down from Meaux to Verdun as the blow of the engine's buffer sends the successive

crashes along a line of trucks. This French army was, as already stated, upon the extreme outside right of Von Kluck's army, divided from it only by the River Ourcq. This was the deciding factor in the subsequent operations.

By midday upon September 6th, according to the despatch of Sir John French, the Germans had realized their dangerous position. The British Army, consisting of five divisions and five cavalry brigades, with its depleted ranks filled up with reinforcements and some of its lost guns replaced, was advancing from the south through the forest of Crécy, men who had limped south with bleeding feet at two miles an hour changing their gait to four or five now that they were bound northward. Von Kluck had placed nothing more substantial than a cavalry screen of two divisions in front of them, while he had detached a strong force of infantry and artillery to fight a rear-guard action against the Sixth French Army and prevent it from crossing the Ourcq.

The desperate struggle of September 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th between Von Kluck and Maunoury may be looked upon as the turning-point of the war. Von Kluck had originally faced Maunoury with his Fourth Reserve Corps on the defensive. Recognizing how critical it was that Maunoury should be crushed, he passed back two more army corps —the Seventh and Second—across the Ourcq, and fell upon the French with such violence that for two days it was impossible to say which side would win. Maunoury and his men fought magnificently, and the Germans showed equal valour. At one time the situation seemed desperate, but twenty thousand men, odds and ends of every kind—Republican Guards, gendarmes, and others—were rushed out from Paris in a five-mile line of automobiles, and the action was restored. Only on the morning of the 10th did the Germans withdraw in despair, held in their front by the brave Maunoury, and in danger of being cut off by the British to the east of them.

THE BRITISH ADVANCE.

The advance of the British upon September 6th was made in unison with that of the Fifth French Army (D'Esperey's) upon the right, and was much facilitated by the fact that Von Kluck had to detach the strong force already mentioned to deal with Maunoury upon the left. The British advanced with the Fourth Division upon the left, the Second Corps in the centre and the First Corps upon the right. The high banks of the Grand Morin were occupied without serious fighting, and the whole line pushed forward for a considerable distance, halting on the Coulommiers-Maisoncelles front. The brunt of the fighting during the day was borne by the French on either wing, the Third and Fourth German Corps being thrown back by D'Esperey's men, among whom the Senegal regiments particularly distinguished themselves. The fighting in this section of the field continued far into the night.

On September 7th the British and the Fifth French were still moving northwards, while the Sixth French were continuing their bitter struggle upon the Ourcq. The British infantry losses were not heavy, though a hidden battery cost the South Lancashires of the Seventh Brigade forty-one casualties. Most of the fighting depended upon the constant touch between the British cavalry and the German. It was again the French armies upon each flank who did the hard work during this eventful day, the first of the German retreat. The Sixth Army were all day at close grips with Von Kluck, while the Fifth drove the enemy back to the line of the Petit Morin River, carrying Vieux-Maisons at the point of the bayonet. Foch's army, still farther to the east, was holding its own in a desperate defensive battle.

CAVALRY FIGHTING.

Of the cavalry skirmishes upon this day one deserves some special record. The Second Cavalry Brigade (De Lisle) was acting at the time as flank guard with the 9th Lancers in front. Coming into contact with some German dragoons near the village of Moncel, there followed a face-to-face charge between two squadrons, each riding through the other. The American, Coleman, who saw the encounter, reckons the odds in numbers to have been two to one against the Lancers. The British Colonel Campbell was wounded, and the adjutant, Captain Reynolds, transfixed through the shoulder by a lance. While drawing the weapon out Captain Allfrey was killed. The other casualties were slight, and those of the German dragoons were considerably greater. This example of shock tactics was almost instantly followed by an exhibition of those mounted rifleman tactics which have been cultivated of late years. A squadron of the 18th Hussars, having dismounted, was immediately charged by a German squadron in close order. About seventy Germans charged, and thirty-two were picked up in front of the dismounted Hussars, while the few who passed through the firing line were destroyed by the horse-holders. It may fairly be argued that had the two squadrons met

with shock tactics, no such crushing effect could possibly have been attained. It is interesting that in one morning two incidents should have occurred which bore so directly upon the perennial dispute between the partisans of the *arme blanche* and those of the rifle.

On the 8th the orders were to advance towards Château-Thierry and to endeavour to reach the Marne. The Germans were retreating fast, but rather on account of their generally faulty strategical position than from tactical compulsion, and they covered themselves with continual rearguard actions, especially along the line of the Petit Morin. It is one of the noticeable results, however, of the use of aircraft that the bluff of a rearguard has disappeared and that it is no longer possible to make such a retreat as Masséna from Torres Vedras, where the pursuer never knew if he were striking at a substance or a shadow. Gough's Second Cavalry Division, which consisted of the Third and Fifth Brigades, swept along and the infantry followed hard at the heels of the horses, Doran's Eighth Brigade suffering the loss of about a hundred men when held up at the crossing of the Petit Morin River near Orly, which they traversed eventually under an effective covering fire from J Battery, R.H.A.

The First Army Corps upon this day forced the Petit Morin at two places, both near La Trétoire, north of Rebaix. The First Division secured the passage at Sablonnières, where the Black Watch seized the heights, causing the German rearguard some losses and taking sixty prisoners. The Second Division met with considerable resistance, but the 2nd Worcesters got over at Le Gravier and the 2nd Grenadier Guards at La Forge. The enemy was then driven from the river bank into the woods, where they were practically surrounded and had eventually to surrender. Eight machine-guns and three hundred and fifty prisoners, many of them from the Guards' Jaeger Battalion, were captured. Six of these machine-guns fell to the Irish Guards.

The Second Army Corps passed the Petit Morin near St. Cyr and St. Ouen, the Thirteenth Brigade attacking the former and the Fourteenth the latter, both being villages on the farther side of the river. Such fighting as there was in this quarter came largely to the 1st Surrey and 2nd Cornwalls, of Rolt's Brigade, but the resistance was not great, and was broken by the artillery fire. To the soldiers engaged the whole action was more like a route march with occasional deployments than a battle.

On the 9th the Army was up to the Marne and was faced with the problem of crossing it. The operations extending over many miles were unimportant in detail, though of some consequence in the mass. The real hard fighting was falling upon the Sixth French Army north of Ligny, which was still in desperate conflict with the German right, and upon Foch's army, which was fighting magnificently at Fère-Champenoise. The advance of the British, together with their own valour, caused the Germans to retire and cleared the passage over the Ourcq for our Allies. The chief losses during the day upon the British side fell upon the Guards' Brigade, the 1st Lincolns, and the 2nd Cornwalls, most of which were inflicted by invisible quick-firing batteries shrouded by the woods which flank the river. The latter regiment lost Colonel Turner, Major Cornish-Bowden, and a number of men in a brilliant piece of woodland fighting, where they drove in a strong German rearguard. The 1st Surrey, who were very forward in the movement, were also hard hit, having six officers and about one hundred and twenty men out of action.

THE 1st LINCOLNS AND THE GUNS.

The British infantry was able on this day to show that woods may serve for other purposes besides hiding batteries. The 1st Lincolns, being held up by a rapid and accurate fire from invisible guns, dispatched two companies, C and D, to make in single file a *détour* under the shelter of the trees. Coming behind the battery, which appears to have had no immediate support, they poured in a rapid fire at two hundred and fifty yards, which laid every man of the German gunners upon the ground. The whole battery was captured. The casualties of the Lincolns in this dashing exploit, which included Captains Hoskyns and Ellison, with Lieutenant Thruston, were unavoidably caused by British shrapnel, our gunners knowing nothing of the movement.

On this date (September 9th) both the First and the Second Army Corps were across the Marne, and advanced some miles to the north of it, killing, wounding, or capturing many hundreds of the enemy. The Sixth French Army was, as stated, fighting hard upon the Ourcq, but the Fifth had won a brilliant success near Montmirail and driven the enemy completely over the river.

Pulteney's Third Corps, still a division

BRITISH INFANTRY DISLODGING THE GERMANS DURING THE FORCING OF THE RIVER MORIN—A TYPICAL INCIDENT DURING THE GERMAN RETREAT FROM PARIS.

short, had been held up by the destruction of the bridges at La Ferté, but on September 10th they were across and the whole Army sweeping northwards. The cavalry overrode all resistance and rounded up a number of prisoners, over two thousand in all. It was a strange reversal of fortune, for here within a fortnight were the same two armies playing the converse parts, the British eagerly pushing on with a flushed consciousness of victory, while the Germans, tired and dispirited, scattered in groups among the woods or were gathered up from the roadsides. It was a day of mist and rain, with muddy,

sodden roads, but all weather is fine weather to the army that is gaining ground. An impression of complete German demoralization became more widespread as transport, shells, and even guns were found littering the high roads, and yet there was really even less cause for it than when the same delusion was held by the Germans. The enemy were actually making a hurried but orderly retreat, and these signs of disaster were only the evidence of a broken rearguard resistance. German armies do not readily dissolve. There is no more cohesive force in the world. But they were undoubtedly hard pressed.

SIXTH BRIGADE'S ACTION AT HAUTVESNES.

About eight o'clock upon the morning of the 10th the Sixth Brigade (Davies') observed a column of the enemy's infantry on a parallel road near the village of Hautvesnes. Artillery fire was at once opened upon them, and a vigorous infantry attack, the 1st Rifles advancing direct with the 1st Berkshires on their right, while the 1st King's Liverpool worked round each flank in Boer fashion. The 2nd Staffords were in support. The Germans had taken refuge in a sunken road, but they were mercilessly lashed by shrapnel, and four hundred of them ran forward with their hands up. The sunken road was filled with their dead and wounded. Some hundreds streamed away across country, but these were mostly gathered up by the Third Division on the left.

In this brisk little action the 50th R.F.A., and later the whole of the 34th Brigade R.F.A., put in some fine work, the shrapnel-fire being most deadly and accurate. The British had pushed their guns freely forward with their cavalry and did much execution with them, though they had the misfortune on this same date, the 10th, to lose, by the answering shell-fire of the enemy, General Findlay, artillery commander of the First Division. In this second action, in which the German rearguard, infantry as well as artillery, was engaged, the 2nd Sussex Regiment, which was leading the First Division, sustained considerable losses near Courchamps or Priez, as did the 1st Northamptons and the 1st North Lancashires. Some three hundred of Bulfin's Second Brigade were hit altogether, among whom was Colonel Knight, of the North Lancashires. The enemy came under heavy fire, both from the infantry and from the guns, so that their losses were considerable, and several hundred of them were captured. The country was very hilly, and the roads so bad that in the exhausted state of men and horses the pursuit could not be sufficiently pressed.

NINTH BRIGADE'S CAPTURE OF GERMANS AT VINLY.

On this same date the Ninth Brigade captured six hundred German infantry, the survivors of a battalion, at the village of Vinly. This seems to have been an incident of the same character as the loss of the Cheshires or of the Munsters in the British retreat, where a body of troops fighting a covering action was left too long, or failed to receive the orders for its withdrawal. The defence was by no means a desperate one, and few of the attacking infantry were killed or wounded. On this date the Fifth and Sixth French Armies were hardly engaged at all, and the whole Allied Force, including General Foch's Seventh French Army on the right of the Fifth, were all sweeping along together in a single rolling steel-crested wave, composed of at least twelve army corps, whilst nine German corps (five of Von Kluck and four of Bülow) retired swiftly before them, hurrying towards the chance of reforming and refitting which the Aisne position would afford them.

On September 11th the British were still advancing upon a somewhat narrowed front. There was no opposition, and again the day bore a considerable crop of prisoners and other trophies. The weather had become so foggy that the aircraft were useless, and it is only when these wonderful scouters are precluded from rising that a general realizes how indispensable they have become to him. As a wit expressed it, they have turned war from a game of cards into a game of chess. It was still very wet, and the Army was exposed to considerable privation, most of the officers and men having neither change of clothing, overcoats, nor waterproof sheets, while the blowing up of bridges on the lines of communication had made it impossible to supply the wants. The undefeatable commissariat, however, was still working well, which means that the Army was doing the same. On the 12th the pursuit was continued as far as the River Aisne. Allenby's cavalry occupied Braine in the early morning, the Queen's Bays being particularly active, but there was so much resistance that the Third Division was needed to make the ground good. Gough's Cavalry Division also ran into the enemy near Chassemy, killing or capturing several hundred of the German infantry. In

"COMING BEHIND THE BATTERY THE 1st LINCOLNS POURED IN A RAPID FIRE AT TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YARDS, WHICH LAID EVERY MAN OF THE GERMAN GUNNERS UPON THE GROUND. THE WHOLE BATTERY WAS CAPTURED."

these operations Captain Stewart, whose experience as an alleged spy has been mentioned, met with a soldier's death. On this day the Sixth French Army was fighting a considerable action upon the British left in the vicinity of Soissons, the Germans making a stand in order to give time for their impedimenta to get over the river. In this they succeeded, so that when the Allied Forces reached the Aisne, which is an unfordable stream some sixty yards from bank to bank, the retiring army had got across it, had destroyed most of the bridges, and showed every sign of being prepared to dispute the crossing.

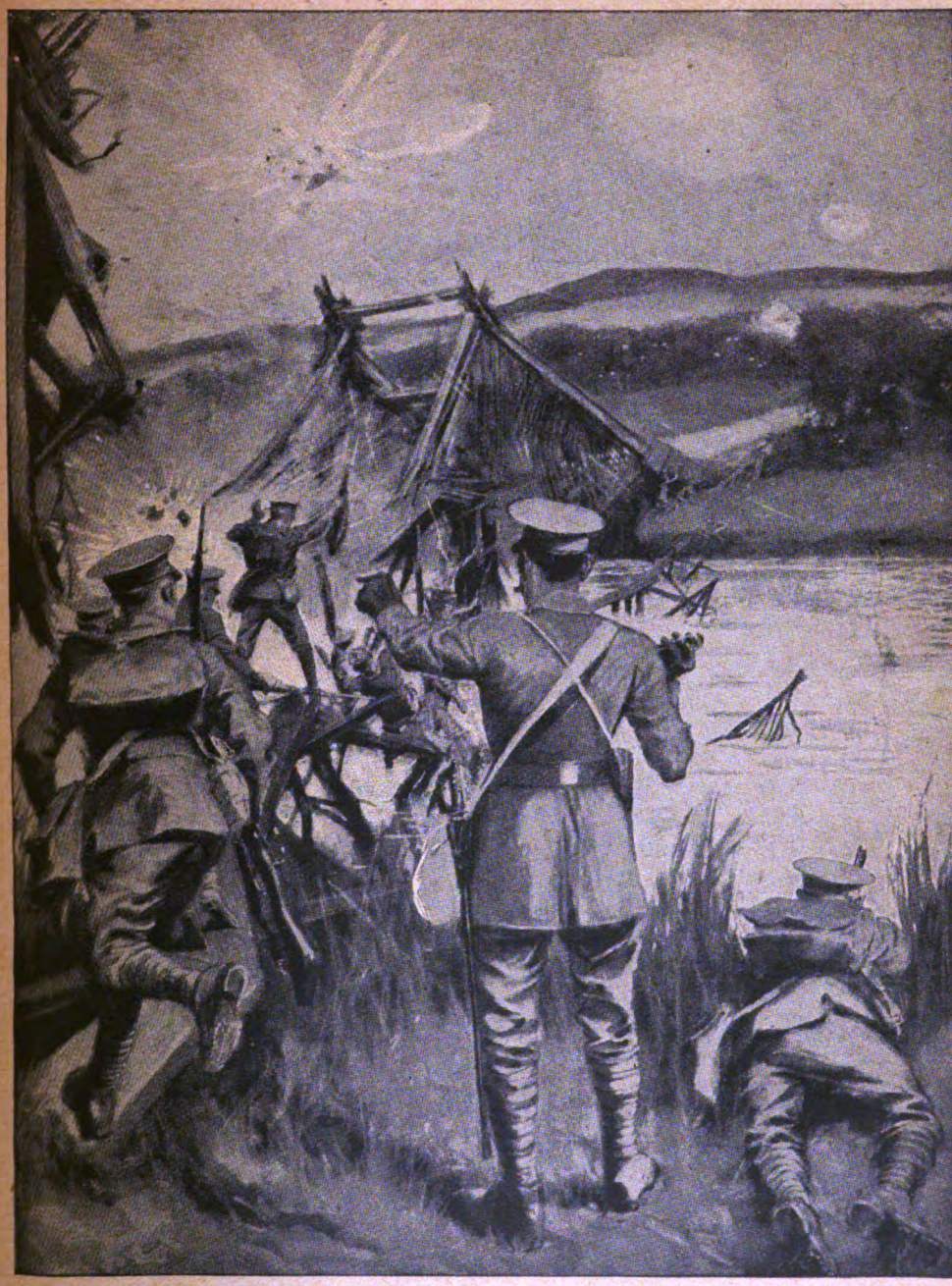
THE PROBLEM OF THE AISNE.

Missy Bridge, facing the Fifth Division, appeared at first to be intact, but a daring reconnaissance by Lieutenant Pennecuick, of the Engineers, showed that it was really badly damaged. Condé Bridge was intact, but was so covered by a high horse-shoe formation of hills upon the farther side that it could not be used, and remained throughout under control of the enemy. Bourg Bridge, however, in front of the First Army Corps, had for some unexplained reason been left undamaged, and this was seized late in the evening—an evening of tempestuous rain and wind—by De Lisle's cavalry, followed rapidly by Bulfin's Second Brigade. It was on the face of it a somewhat desperate enterprise which lay immediately in front of the British general. If the enemy were still retreating he could not afford to slacken his pursuit, while, on the other hand, if the enemy were merely making a feint of resistance, then, at all hazards, the stream must be forced and the rearguard driven in. The German infantry could be seen streaming up the roads on the farther bank of the river, but there were no signs of what their next disposition might be. Air reconnaissance was still precluded, and it was impossible to say for certain which alternative might prove to be correct, but Sir John French's cavalry training must incline him always to the braver course. The officer who rode through the Boers to Kimberley and threw himself with his weary men across the path of the formidable Kronje was not likely to stand hesitating upon the banks of the Aisne. His personal opinion was that the enemy meant to stand and fight, but none the less the order was given to cross.

September 13th was spent in arranging this dashing and dangerous movement. The British got across eventually in several places and by various devices. Bulfin's men, followed by the rest of the First Division of Haig's Army Corps, passed the canal bridge of Bourg with no loss or difficulty. The Eleventh Brigade of Pulteney's Third Corps got some men across by a ferry in the neighbourhood of Venizel. They were followed by the Twelfth Brigade, who established themselves near Bucy. The Thirteenth Brigade was held up at Missy, but the Fourteenth got across and lined up with the men of the Third Corps in the neighbourhood of Ste. Marguerite, meeting with a considerable resistance from the Germans. Later, Count Gleichen's Fifteenth Brigade also got across. On the right Hamilton got over with two brigades of the Third Division, the Third Brigade crossing on a single plank at Vailly and the Ninth using the railway bridge, while the whole of Haig's First Corps had before evening got a footing upon the farther bank. So eager was the advance and so inadequate the means that Haking's Fifth Brigade of Infantry, led by the Connaught Rangers, was obliged to get over the broad and dangerous river walking in single file along the sloping girder of a ruined bridge, under a heavy, though distant, shell-fire. The night of September 13th saw the main body of the Army across the river, already conscious of a strong rearguard action, but not yet aware that the whole German army had halted and was turning at bay. On the right De Lisle's cavalrymen had pushed up the slope from Bourg Bridge and reached as far as Vendresse, where they were pulled up by the German lines.

It has been mentioned above that the Eleventh and Twelfth Brigades of the Fourth Division had passed the river at Venizel. These troops were across in the early afternoon, and they at once advanced, and proved that in that portion of the field the enemy were undoubtedly standing fast. The Eleventh Brigade, which was more to the north, had only a constant shell-fall to endure, but the Twelfth, pushing forward through Bucy-le-long, found itself in front of a line of woods from which there swept a heavy machine-gun and rifle-fire. The advance was headed by the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers supported by the 2nd Inniskilling Fusiliers. It was across open ground and under heavy fire, but it was admirably carried out. In places where the machine-guns had got the exact range the stricken Fusiliers lay dead or wounded with accurate intervals, like a firing-line on a field day. The losses were heavy, especially in the Lancashire Fusiliers. Colonel Griffin was wounded, and five of his officers with two hundred and fifty men were among the casualties. It should be recorded that fresh supplies of ammunition were brought up at personal risk by Colonel Seely, late Minister of War, in his motor-car. The contest continued until dusk, when the troops waited for the battle of next day under such cover as they could find.

The crossing of the stream may be said, upon the one side, to mark the end of the battle and pursuit of the Marne, while, on the other, it commenced that interminable Battle of the Aisne which was destined to



BRITISH TROOPS, UNDER SHELL-FIRE, CROSSING THE AISNE IN SINGLE FILE BY MEANS OF THE GIRDER OF A RUINED BRIDGE.

fulfil Bloch's prophecies and to set the type of all great modern engagements. The prolonged struggles of the Manchurian War had prepared men's minds for such a development, but only here did it first assume its full proportions and warn us that the battle of the future was to be the siege of the past. Men remembered with a smile Bernhardi's confident assertion that a German battle would be decided in one day, and that his countrymen would never be constrained to fight in defensive trenches.

The moral effect of the Battle of the Marne was greater than its material gains. The

latter, so far as the British were concerned, did not exceed five thousand prisoners, twenty guns, and a quantity of transport. The total losses, however, were very heavy. The Germans had perfected a method of burning their dead with the aid of petrol. These numerous holocausts over the country-side were found afterwards by the peasants to have left mounds of charred animal matter which were scattered by their industrious hands on the fields which they might help to fertilize. The heat of cremation had dissolved the bones, but the teeth in most cases remained intact, so that over an area of France it was no uncommon thing to see them gleaming in the clods on either side of the new-cut furrow. Had the ring of high-born German criminals who planned the war seen in some apocalyptic vision the detailed results of their own villainy, it is hard to doubt that even their hearts and consciences would have shrunk from the deed.

Apart from the losses the mere fact that a great German army had been hustled across thirty miles of country, had been driven from river to river, and had finally to take refuge in trenches in order to hold their ground, was a great encouragement to the Allies. From that time they felt assured that with anything like equal numbers they had an ascendancy over their opponents. Save in the matter of heavy guns and machine-guns, there was not a single arm in which they did not feel that they were the equals or the superiors. Nor could they forget that this foe, whom they were driving in the open and holding in the trenches, was one who had rushed into the war with men and material all carefully prepared for this day of battle, while their own strength lay in the future. If the present was bright, it would surely be incomparably brighter when the reserves of France and the vast resources of the British Empire were finally brought into line. There had never from the beginning been a doubt of final victory, but from this time on it became less an opinion and more a demonstrable and mathematical certainty.

WHY THE MARNE IS ONE OF THE GREAT BATTLES OF ALL TIME.

The battle must also be regarded as a fixed point in military history, since it was the first time since the days of the great Napoleon that a Prussian army had been turned and driven. In three successive wars—against the Danes, the Austrians, and the French—they had lived always in the warm sunshine of success. Now, at last, came the first chill of disaster. Partly from their excellent military qualities, but even more on account of their elaborate and methodical preparations, joined with a want of scruple which allowed them to force a war at the moment when they could take their adversary at a disadvantage, they had established a legend of invincibility. This they left behind them with their cannon and their prisoners between the Marne and the Aisne. It had been feared that free men, trained in liberal and humane methods, could never equal in military efficiency those who had passed through the savage discipline which is the heritage of the methods that first made Prussia great at the expense of her neighbours. This shadow was henceforth for ever lifted from men's minds, and it was shown that the kindly comradeship which exists in the Western armies between officers and men was not incompatible with the finest fighting qualities of which any soldiers are capable.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BATTLE OF THE AISNE.

The Hazardous Crossing of the Aisne—Wonderful Work of the Sappers—The Fight for the Sugar Factory—General Advance of the Army—The Fourth (Guards) Brigade's Difficult Task—Cavalry as a Mobile Reserve.

THE HAZARDOUS CROSSING OF THE AISNE.

THE stretch of river which confronted the British Army when they set about the hazardous crossing of the Aisne was about fifteen miles in length. It lay as nearly as possible east and west, so that the advance was from south to north. As the British

faced the river the First Army Corps was on the right of their line, together with half the cavalry. In the centre was the Second Corps, on the left the Third Corps, which was still without one of its divisions (the Sixth), but retained, on the other hand, the Nineteenth Brigade, which did not belong to it. Each of these British corps covered a front of, roughly, five miles. Across the broad and swift river a considerable German army with a powerful artillery were waiting to dispute the passage. On the right of the British were the French Fifth and Seventh Armies, and on their left, forming the extremity of the Allied line, was the French Sixth Army, acting in such close co-operation with the British Third Corps in the Soissons region that their guns were often turned upon the same point. This Sixth French Army, with the British Army, may be looked upon as the left wing of the huge Allied line which stretched away with many a curve and bend to the Swiss frontier. During all this hurried retreat from the Marne, it is to be remembered that the Eastern German armies had hardly moved at all. It was their four armies of the right which had swung back like a closing door, the Crown Prince's Fifth Army being the hinge upon which it turned. Now the door had ceased to swing, and one solid barrier presented itself to the Allies. It is probable that the German preponderance of numbers was, for the moment, much lessened or even had ceased to exist, for the losses in battle, the detachments for Russia, and the operations in Belgium had all combined to deplete the German ranks.

The Belgian army had retired into Antwerp before the fall of Brussels, but they were by no means a force to be disregarded, being fired by that sense of intolerable wrong which is the most formidable stimulant to a virile nation. From the shelter of the Antwerp entrenchments they continually buzzed out against the German lines of communication, and although they were usually beaten back, and were finally pent in, they still added to the great debt of gratitude which the Allies already owed them by holding up a considerable body, two army corps at least, of good troops. On the other hand, the fortress of Maubeuge, on the northern French frontier, which had been invested within a few days of the battle of Mons, had now fallen before the heavy German guns, with the result that at least a division of troops under Von Zwehl and these same masterful guns were now released for service on the Aisne.

WONDERFUL WORK OF THE SAPPERS.

The more one considers the operation of the crossing of the Aisne with the battle which followed it, the more one is impressed by the extraordinary difficulty of the task, the swift, debonair way in which it was tackled, and the pushful audacity of the various commanders in gaining a foothold upon the farther side. Consider that upon the 12th the Army was faced by a deep, broad, unfordable river with only one practicable bridge in the fifteen miles opposite them. They had a formidable enemy armed with powerful artillery standing on the defensive upon a line of uplands commanding every crossing and approach, whilst the valley was so broad that ordinary guns upon the corresponding uplands could have no effect, and good positions lower down were hard to find. There was the problem. And yet upon the 14th the bulk of the Army was across and had established itself in positions from which it could never afterwards be driven. All arms must have worked well to bring about such a result, but what can be said of the Royal Engineers, who built under heavy fire in that brief space nine bridges, some of them capable of taking heavy traffic, while they restored five of the bridges which the enemy had destroyed! September 13th, 1914, should be recorded in their annals as a marvellous example of personal self-sacrifice and technical proficiency.

Sir John French, acting with great swiftness and decision, did not lose an hour after he had established himself in force upon the northern bank of the river in pushing his men ahead and finding out what was in front of him. The weather was still very wet and heavy mists drew a veil over the German dispositions, but the advance went forward. The British right wing, consisting of the First Division of the First Corps, had established itself most securely, as was natural, since it was the one corps which had found an unbroken bridge in front of it. The First Division had pushed forward as far as Moulins and Vendresse, which lie about two miles north of the river. Now, in the early hours of the 14th, the whole of the Second Division got over. The immediate narrative, therefore, is concerned with the doings of the two divisions of the First Corps, upon which fell the first and chief strain of the very important and dangerous advance upon that date.

On the top of the line of chalk hills which faced the British was an ancient and famous highway, the Chemin-des-dames, which, like all ancient highways, had been carried along the crest of the ridge. This was in the German

possession, and it became the objective of the British attack. The Second Infantry Brigade (Bulfin's) led the way, working upwards in the early morning from Vendresse through the hamlet of Troyon towards the great road. This brigade, consisting of the 2nd Sussex, 1st Northamptons, 1st North Lancashire, and 2nd Rifles, drawn mostly from solid shire regiments, was second to none in the Army. Just north of Troyon was a considerable deserted sugar factory, which formed a feature in the landscape. It lay within a few hundred yards of the Chemin-des-dames, while another winding road, cut in the side of the hill, lay an equal distance to the south of it, and was crossed by the British in their advance. This road, which was somewhat sunken in the chalk, and thus offered some cover to a crouching man, played an important part in the operations.

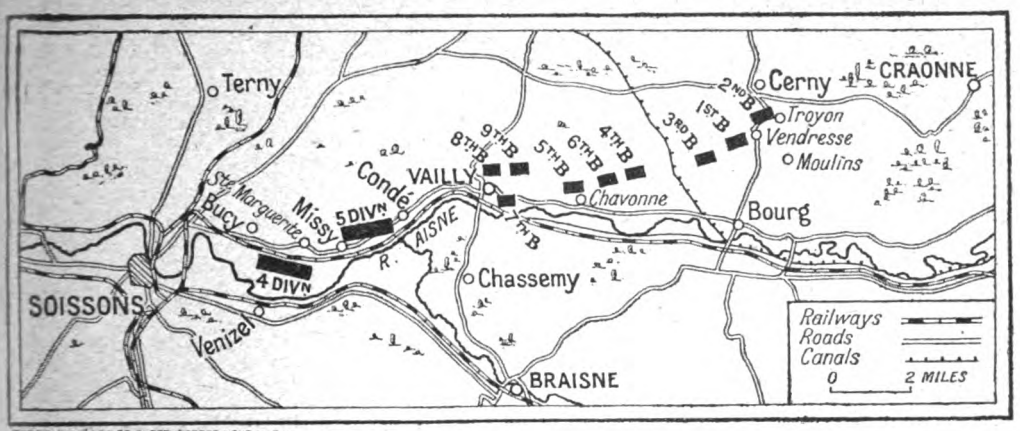
THE FIGHT FOR THE SUGAR FACTORY.

Lieutenant Balfour and a picket of the 2nd Rifles, having crept up and reconnoitred the factory, returned with the information that it was held by the Germans and that twelve guns were in position three hundred yards to the east of it. General Bulfin then—it was about three-thirty in the morning—sent the 2nd Rifles and the 2nd Sussex Regiment forward, with the factory and an adjoining whitewashed farmhouse as their objective. The 1st North Lancashires followed in immediate support, while the 1st Northamptons remained in reserve. The attacking force was under the immediate command of Colonel Serocold, of the Rifles. The three advanced regiments drove in the pickets of the Germans and after a severe fight turned the enemy out of his front trench, A company of the Sussex capturing several hundred prisoners. A number of men, however, including Colonel Montresor, were shot while rounding up these Germans and sending them to the rear. The advanced line had suffered severely, so the North Lancashires were called up and launched at the sugar factory, which they carried with a magnificent bayonet attack in spite of a fierce German resistance. Their losses were very heavy, including Major Lloyd, their commander, but their victory was a glorious one. The two batteries of the enemy were now commanded by machine-guns, brought up to the factory by Lieutenant Dashwood of the Sussex. The enemy made a brave attempt to get these guns away, but the teams and men were shot down, and it was a German Colenso. The British, however, unlike the Boers, were unable to get away the prizes of their victory. The factory was abandoned as it was exposed to heavy fire, and the four regiments formed a firing-line, taking such cover as they could find, but a German counter attack developed which was so strong that they were forced slowly down the hill.

A small party of Rifles and Sussex, under Cathcart and Foljambe, clung hard to the captured guns, sending repeated messages: "For God's sake, bring horses and fetch away these pieces!" No horses were, however, available, and eventually both the guns and the buildings were regained by the strong German advance, the former being disabled before they were abandoned by their captors. Major Green and a company of the Sussex, with some of the Coldstream under Major Grant, had got as far forward as the Chemin-des-dames, but fell back steadily when their flank was finally exposed. Nothing could exceed the desperate gallantry of officers and men. Major Jelf, severely wounded, cheered on his riflemen until evening. Major Warre of the same regiment and Major Phillips rallied the hard-pressed line again and again. Lieutenant Spread, of the Lancashires, worked his machine-gun until it was smashed, and then, wounded as he was, brought up a second gun and continued the fight. Major Burrows rallied the Lancashires when their leader, Major Lloyd, was hit. Brigade-Major Watson, of the Queen's, was everywhere in the thick of the firing. No men could have been better led, nor could any leaders have better men.

GENERAL ADVANCE OF THE ARMY.

Meanwhile, it is necessary to follow what had been going on at the immediate left of Bulfin's Brigade. The First Brigade had moved up in the face of a considerable fire until it came to be nearly as far north as the factory, but to the west of it. General Bulfin, finding himself hard pressed, appealed to his neighbour for assistance, which was at once given. The 1st Coldstream were sent across to help the dismounted cavalry to cover Bulfin's right, since the main German attack seemed to be coming from that quarter. The 1st Scots Guards was held in reserve, but the other regiments of the First Brigade, the 1st Black Watch and the 1st Camerons (the latter regiment had taken the place of the brave but unfortunate Munsters), lined up on the left of the factory and found themselves swept by the same devastating fire which had checked the advance. This fire came from



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MAP SHOWING THE BRITISH ADVANCE AT THE BATTLE OF THE AISNE.

the fringe of the woods and from a line of powerful entrenchments lying north-east of the factory on the edge of the Chemin-des-dames. Up to this time the British had no artillery support on account of the mist, but now Geddes' Twenty-fifth Brigade R.F.A., comprising the 113th, 114th, and 115th Batteries, was brought to its assistance. It could do little good in such a dim light, and one battery, the 115th, under Major Johnstone, which pushed up within eight hundred yards of the enemy's position, was itself nearly destroyed. The 116th R.F.A. also did great work. The whole infantry line, including a mixture of units, men of the Rifles, Sussex, and North Lancashires, with a sprinkling of Guardsmen and Black Watch from the First Brigade, came slowly down the hill—"sweating blood to hold their own," as one of them described it—until they reached the sunken road which has been already mentioned. There General Bulfin had stationed himself with the 1st Northamptons as a reserve, and the line steadied itself, re-formed, and, with the support of the guns, made head once more against the advancing Germans, who were unable to make any progress against the fire which was poured into them. With such spades and picks as could be got, a line of shallow trenches was thrown up and these were held against all attacks for the rest of the day.* It was the haphazard line of these hurriedly-dug shelters which determined the position retained in the weeks to come. As this was the apex of the British advance and all the corps upon the left were in turn brought to a standstill and driven to make trenches, the whole line of the First Corps formed a long diagonal slash across the hillside, with its right close to the Chemin-des-dames and its left upon the river in the neighbourhood of Chavonne. The result was that now and always the trenches of the Second Brigade were in an extremely exposed position, for they were open not only to the direct fire of the Germans, which was not very severe, but to an enfilading fire from more distant guns upon each flank. Their immediate neighbours upon the right were the 1st Queen's Surrey, acting as flank-guard, and a Moroccan corps from the Fifth French Army, which had not reached so advanced a position, and was in echelon upon their right rear.

It has already been shown how the First Brigade was divided up, the 1st Coldstream crossing over to the right of the Second Brigade in order to help to keep down the German fire, which was most heavy from that flank. The rest of this brigade had carried out an advance parallel to that described, and many of the Black Watch got mixed with Bulfin's men when they were driven back to what proved to be the permanent British line. This advance of the First Brigade intercepted a strong force of the enemy which was creeping round the left flank of the Second Brigade. The counter-stroke brought the flank attack to a standstill. The leading regiments of the First Brigade suffered very severely, however, especially the Cameron Highlanders, whose gallantry carried them far to the front. This regiment lost Lieutenant-Colonel MacLachlan, two majors (Maitland and Nicholson), three captains, eleven lieutenants, and about three

* Until an accurate German military history of the war shall appear, it is difficult to compute the exact rival forces in any engagement, but in this attack of the Second Brigade, where six British regiments may be said to have been involved, there are some data. A German officer, describing the same engagement, says that, apart from the original German force, the reinforcements amounted to fourteen battalions, from the Guards' Jaeger, the 4th Jaeger Regiment, 65th, 13th Reserve, and 13th and 16th Landwehr Regiments.

hundred rank and file in the action. Some of these fell into the hands of the enemy, but the great majority were killed or wounded. When the line on their right fell back, they conformed to the movement until they received support from two companies of the 1st Gloucesters from the Third Brigade upon their left rear.

THE FOURTH (GUARDS) BRIGADE'S DIFFICULT TASK.

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CAVALRY AS A MOBILE RESERVE.

It is impossible not to admire the way in which the German general in command observed and attempted to profit by any gap in the British line. It has already been shown how he tried to push his column between the two divisions of the First Corps and was only stopped by the deployment of the Third Brigade. Later, an even fairer chance presented itself, and he was quick to take advantage of it. The advance of the Guards' Brigade to the Ostel ridge had caused a considerable gap between them and the nearest unit of the Second Corps, and also between the First Corps and the river. A German attack came swarming down upon the weak spot. From Troyon to Ostel, over five miles of ground, Haig's corps was engaged to the last man and pinned down in their positions. It was not possible to fill the gap. Not to fill it might have meant disaster—disaster under heavy shell-fire with an unfordable river in the rear. Here was a supreme example of the grand work that was done when our cavalry were made efficient as dismounted riflemen. Their mobility brought them quickly to the danger spot. Their training turned them in an instant from horsemen to infantry. The 15th Hussars, the South Irish Horse, the whole of Briggs' First Cavalry Brigade, and finally the whole of De Lisle's Second Cavalry Brigade, were thrown into the gap. The German advance was stayed and the danger passed. From now onwards the echelon formed by the units of the First Corps ended with these cavalry brigades near Chavonne to the immediate north of the river.

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Towards evening, in spite of the fact that there were no reserves and that all the troops had endured heavy losses and great fatigue, a general advance was ordered in the hope of gaining the high ground of the Chemin des dames before night. It was nearly sunset when the orders were given and the troops responded gallantly to the call, though many of them had been in action since daybreak. The fire, however, was very heavy, and no great progress could be made. The First Division gained some ground, but was brought to a standstill. The only brigade which made good headway was Haking's Fifth, which reached the crest of the hill in the neighbourhood of Tilleul de Courtecon. General Haking sent out scouts, and finding German outposts upon both his flanks he withdrew under cover of darkness.

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possession, and it became the objective of the British attack. The Second Infantry Brigade (Bulfin's) led the way, working upwards in the early morning from Vendresse through the hamlet of Troyon towards the great road. This brigade, consisting of the 2nd Sussex, 1st Northamptons, 1st North Lancashire, and 2nd Rifles, drawn mostly from solid shire regiments, was second to none in the Army. Just north of Troyon was a considerable deserted sugar factory, which formed a feature in the landscape. It lay within a few hundred yards of the Chemin-des-dames, while another winding road, cut in the side of the hill, lay an equal distance to the south of it, and was crossed by the British in their advance. This road, which was somewhat sunken in the chalk, and thus offered some cover to a crouching man, played an important part in the operations.

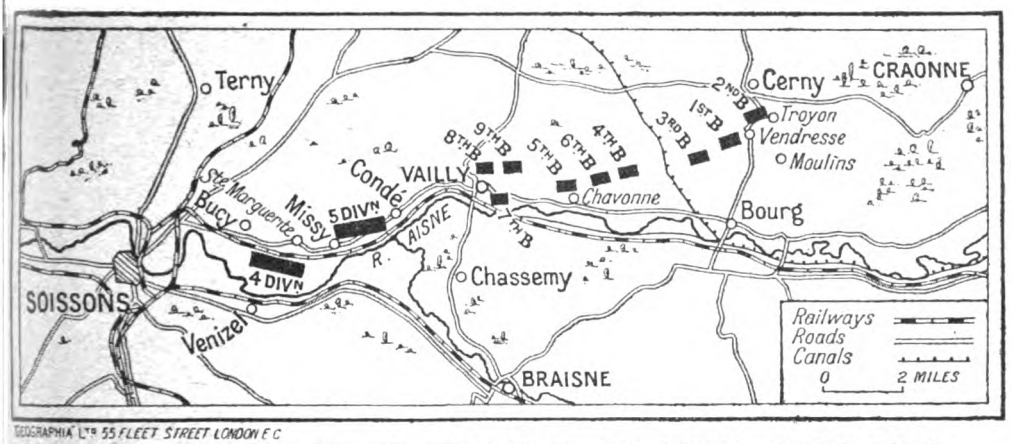
THE FIGHT FOR THE SUGAR FACTORY.

Lieutenant Balfour and a picket of the 2nd Rifles, having crept up and reconnoitred the factory, returned with the information that it was held by the Germans and that twelve guns were in position three hundred yards to the east of it. General Bulfin then—it was about three-thirty in the morning—sent the 2nd Rifles and the 2nd Sussex Regiment forward, with the factory and an adjoining whitewashed farmhouse as their objective. The 1st North Lancashires followed in immediate support, while the 1st Northamptons remained in reserve. The attacking force was under the immediate command of Colonel Serocold, of the Rifles. The three advanced regiments drove in the pickets of the Germans and after a severe fight turned the enemy out of his front trench, A company of the Sussex capturing several hundred prisoners. A number of men, however, including Colonel Montresor, were shot while rounding up these Germans and sending them to the rear. The advanced line had suffered severely, so the North Lancashires were called up and launched at the sugar factory, which they carried with a magnificent bayonet attack in spite of a fierce German resistance. Their losses were very heavy, including Major Lloyd, their commander, but their victory was a glorious one. The two batteries of the enemy were now commanded by machine-guns, brought up to the factory by Lieutenant Dashwood of the Sussex. The enemy made a brave attempt to get these guns away, but the teams and men were shot down, and it was a German Colenso. The British, however, unlike the Boers, were unable to get away the prizes of their victory. The factory was abandoned as it was exposed to heavy fire, and the four regiments formed a firing-line, taking such cover as they could find, but a German counter attack developed which was so strong that they were forced slowly down the hill.

A small party of Rifles and Sussex, under Cathcart and Foljambe, clung hard to the captured guns, sending repeated messages: "For God's sake, bring horses and fetch away these pieces!" No horses were, however, available, and eventually both the guns and the buildings were regained by the strong German advance, the former being disabled before they were abandoned by their captors. Major Green and a company of the Sussex, with some of the Coldstream under Major Grant, had got as far forward as the Chemin-des-dames, but fell back steadily when their flank was finally exposed. Nothing could exceed the desperate gallantry of officers and men. Major Jelf, severely wounded, cheered on his riflemen until evening. Major Warre of the same regiment and Major Phillips rallied the hard-pressed line again and again. Lieutenant Spread, of the Lancashires, worked his machine-gun until it was smashed, and then, wounded as he was, brought up a second gun and continued the fight. Major Burrows rallied the Lancashires when their leader, Major Lloyd, was hit. Brigade-Major Watson, of the Queen's, was everywhere in the thick of the firing. No men could have been better led, nor could any leaders have better men.

GENERAL ADVANCE OF THE ARMY.

Meanwhile, it is necessary to follow what had been going on at the immediate left of Bulfin's Brigade. The First Brigade had moved up in the face of a considerable fire until it came to be nearly as far north as the factory, but to the west of it. General Bulfin, finding himself hard pressed, appealed to his neighbour for assistance, which was at once given. The 1st Coldstream were sent across to help the dismounted cavalry to cover Bulfin's right, since the main German attack seemed to be coming from that quarter. The 1st Scots Guards was held in reserve, but the other regiments of the First Brigade, the 1st Black Watch and the 1st Camerons (the latter regiment had taken the place of the brave but unfortunate Munsters), lined up on the left of the factory and found themselves swept by the same devastating fire which had checked the advance. This fire came from



GEOGRAPHIA LTD 55 FLEET STREET LONDON E C

MAP SHOWING THE BRITISH ADVANCE AT THE BATTLE OF THE AISNE.

the fringe of the woods and from a line of powerful entrenchments lying north-east of the factory on the edge of the Chemin-des-dames. Up to this time the British had no artillery support on account of the mist, but now Geddes' Twenty-fifth Brigade R.F.A., comprising the 113th, 114th, and 115th Batteries, was brought to its assistance. It could do little good in such a dim light, and one battery, the 115th, under Major Johnstone, which pushed up within eight hundred yards of the enemy's position, was itself nearly destroyed. The 116th R.F.A. also did great work. The whole infantry line, including a mixture of units, men of the Rifles, Sussex, and North Lancashires, with a sprinkling of Guardsmen and Black Watch from the First Brigade, came slowly down the hill—"sweating blood to hold their own," as one of them described it—until they reached the sunken road which has been already mentioned. There General Bulfin had stationed himself with the 1st Northamptons as a reserve, and the line steadied itself, re-formed, and, with the support of the guns, made head once more against the advancing Germans, who were unable to make any progress against the fire which was poured into them. With such spades and picks as could be got, a line of shallow trenches was thrown up and these were held against all attacks for the rest of the day.* It was the haphazard line of these hurriedly-dug shelters which determined the position retained in the weeks to come. As this was the apex of the British advance and all the corps upon the left were in turn brought to a standstill and driven to make trenches, the whole line of the First Corps formed a long diagonal slash across the hillside, with its right close to the Chemin-des-dames and its left upon the river in the neighbourhood of Chavonne. The result was that now and always the trenches of the Second Brigade were in an extremely exposed position, for they were open not only to the direct fire of the Germans, which was not very severe, but to an enfilading fire from more distant guns upon each flank. Their immediate neighbours upon the right were the 1st Queen's Surrey, acting as flank-guard, and a Moroccan corps from the Fifth French Army, which had not reached so advanced a position, and was in echelon upon their right rear.

It has already been shown how the First Brigade was divided up, the 1st Coldstream crossing over to the right of the Second Brigade in order to help to keep down the German fire, which was most heavy from that flank. The rest of this brigade had carried out an advance parallel to that described, and many of the Black Watch got mixed with Bulfin's men when they were driven back to what proved to be the permanent British line. This advance of the First Brigade intercepted a strong force of the enemy which was creeping round the left flank of the Second Brigade. The counter-stroke brought the flank attack to a standstill. The leading regiments of the First Brigade suffered very severely, however, especially the Cameron Highlanders, whose gallantry carried them far to the front. This regiment lost Lieutenant-Colonel MacLachlan, two majors (Maitland and Nicholson), three captains, eleven lieutenants, and about three

* Until an accurate German military history of the war shall appear, it is difficult to compute the exact rival forces in any engagement, but in this attack of the Second Brigade, where six British regiments may be said to have been involved, there are some data. A German officer, describing the same engagement, says that, apart from the original German force, the reinforcements amounted to fourteen battalions, from the Guards' Jaeger, the 4th Jaeger Regiment, 65th, 13th Reserve, and 13th and 16th Landwehr Regiments.

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Thus ended the sharp and indecisive action of September 14th, the Germans holding their ground, but being unable to drive back the Allies, who maintained their position and opposed an impassable obstacle to the renewed advance upon Paris. The battle was marked by the common features of advance, arrest, and entrenchment, which occurred not only in the British front, but in that of the French armies upon either flank. When the action ceased, the 1st Northamptons and the 1st Queen's Surrey, detached from the Third Brigade and sent to guard the pressure point at the extreme right of the line, had actually reached the Chemin-des-dames, the British objective, and had dug themselves in upon the edge of it. From this very advanced spot the British line extended diagonally across the hillside for many miles until it reached the river. Several hundred prisoners and some guns were taken in the course of the fighting. When one considers the predominant position of the Germans, and that their artillery was able to give them constant assistance, whereas that of the British and French was only brought up with the utmost difficulty, we can only marvel that the infantry were able to win and to hold the ground.

(To be continued.)

EGG-SHELL

By ROLAND PERTWEE

Illustrated by E. S. Hodgson.

THERE is no gainsaying the fact that Simon Caleb, dealer in curios and porcelain, of the city of Bristol, was a very unpopular man. His business methods were unscrupulous, not to say slim, and were freely denounced by his fellow-craftsmen. His unpopularity was heightened by the fact that he was uncommonly lucky in the purchases he made and their subsequent marketing.

Thus, when it became known that Simon had bought an egg-shell plate of the very finest quality and decoration, and had bought it from an aged and infirm cottager for the price of sixpence, public opinion ran very high indeed.

Sympathy for the cottager was to be heard on every side, and the number of dealers who called at Simon's shop to find out the invalid's address was quite remarkable.

Simon, however, preserved a reticence on the subject, and their solicitations came to naught.

The only person who succeeded in ascertaining it was Mr. Palliser, of Palliser and Tonge, and the knowledge came to him without resorting to Simon's premises. Mr. Palliser lost no time in paying a call upon the bed-ridden old lady, and brightened up her declining days by describing to what extent she had been imposed upon. He even went so far as to intimate his willingness to buy any similar trifle she might possess at its true value—namely, half a crown. But Simon had looked to it that no other valuable had escaped his vigilant eye. Mr. Palliser hid his chagrin as best he might and demanded to know the origin of the egg-shell plate.

The invalid's mind was not very clear upon the subject, but she hazarded the belief that her niece had acquired it whilst in service. When or how this had taken place she was unable to answer, and the niece being dead Palliser's chances of solving the antecedents of the plate were fairly remote.

Consequently, after a few expressions of sympathy over his hostess's unhappy ailment, he took his departure.

Having been commissioned by Lord Louis Lewis, the well-known connoisseur, to buy egg-shell porcelain, Mr. Palliser was not unnaturally aggrieved that this particular specimen should have escaped him.

He thereupon conceived a plan whereby he could induce Simon Caleb to enter into a partnership with him for the purpose of negotiating the plate to their mutual advantage.

With this end in view, he called upon Simon and asked permission to examine the plate.

"What for?" asked Simon.

"If it's genuine I might find you a customer," he said.

"I can find all the customers I want, without any help from you," was the rejoinder. However, he produced the plate, and Palliser purred in admiration over it.

"Remarkable!" he said. "Quite remarkable. The odd thing is that it's the dead spit of a plate I've got at home. Though mine isn't genuine," he added. "How much are you going to ask for it?"

"Four hundred pounds," was the reply.

"I doubt if it's worth that," said Palliser.

"Lord Louis Lewis would buy it like a shot," said Simon.

Palliser frowned. "Lord Louis only buys through me," he said.

"He would make an exception if he saw this plate," said Simon.

"He wouldn't," said Palliser. "He's got a tight contract with me. It would be to your advantage to let me have it for a couple of hundred pounds."

Simon Caleb extended a hand. "You are out of this deal," he said. "I only showed you the thing to make your mouth water. Besides, where'd you raise a couple of hundred, I should like to know? I was told that the Official Receiver was in at your place."

"Who said so?" asked Palliser, quickly.

Simon grinned. "Never you mind," he said. "Hand me back the plate."

Palliser backed a pace. "You won't let me into the deal, then?" he said.

"No," said Simon, emphatically. "What's the good of dividing profits when you can get them all?"

"A pity," said Palliser. "A great pity."

Then, for a man who was presumably accustomed to the handling of delicate ware, Mr. Palliser did a strange thing. He dropped the egg-shell plate, and so that there should be no doubt whatsoever as to the result, he dropped it upon a slab of green malachite marble reposing conveniently upon the floor of the shop.

One of the peculiarities of egg-shell china is its inability to withstand the shock of a fall and at the same time preserve its original outlines. This plate proved no exception to the rule. What a moment before had been a single piece of rare quality, now, by the process of contact, had become a matter of some sixty fragments of varying shapes and sizes. To a devotee of jigsaw puzzles the task of re-uniting these several atoms would have been one of exceptional interest.

One would imagine that the loss of such an *objet d'art* would have excited these two gentry into a display of emotion. This, however, was not the case. From an æsthetic point of view neither of them was in the least moved; the truth being that their admiration for a thing of beauty was measured entirely by its marketable value.

Palliser was the first to break the silence. "My!" he said. "However did I come to do that?"

"On purpose," said Simon, and reached across for an invoice form.

"What are you going to do about it?" asked Palliser.

Simon dipped his pen into the ink and wiped it on the inside of his coat-sleeve. "Make you out a bill for four hundred pounds," he replied.

"I haven't got any money," said Palliser. "I'm on the verge of bankruptcy. You wouldn't realize sixpence in the pound."

"HE PRODUCED THE PLATE, AND PALLISER PURRED IN ADMIRATION OVER IT."

Simon regarded him through narrowing lids. "Palliser," he said, "you're a dirty dog—a dirty dog in the manger."

"You would never have got four hundred for it," said Palliser, irrelevantly. "But there is no reason why we shouldn't both make a bit now."

Simon Caleb picked up a heavily-carved Maori whip-handle and emerged from behind the counter to do violence against the person of Mr. Palliser.

"Don't be a fool," said Palliser, backing towards the door. "Don't be a fool. I had the very best reason for breaking that plate."

"Not such a good one as mine for breaking your head," said Simon, and made a sweep with his weapon, greatly endangering the safety of an Oriental bowl in the near vicinity. Palliser realized that his present position was by no means secure. Being a man of resource, he threw his arms about a tall glass case in which the rarer specimens of Simon's collection were exhibited.

"Touch me," said he, "and I'll push the lot over."

Simon hesitated. He was fully aware that Palliser would not hesitate to commit this further depredation, and, much as he desired to attack the creature before him, the contents of that case represented a great deal of invested capital. Its journey to the floor would inevitably result in a severe financial loss to himself. Moreover, he was uncertain to what extent the law would support his act of violence.

Palliser, as a keen psychologist, followed to a nicety the working of his adversary's mind. He also appreciated the value of his present situation, and determined not to relax his hold until a satisfactory understanding had been arrived at.

"Why did you drop the plate?" asked Simon, impotently.

"Business," he replied; "business. Even at Christie's it never would have fetched two hundred."

"Lord Louis would have paid four, and been glad to," said Simon.

"Even if he had," replied Palliser, "you would have only got half of that for yourself. He is a funny chap, Lord Louis is. Always insists that the original owner has half the profits. You would have had to split the cheque with that precious old lady you swindled."

Simon smiled. "Do you think I should have been such a fool as to let him know where it came from?" he said.

"If you hadn't, I should," said Palliser. "So you see two hundred is the outside you would have touched. Now, if you will let me into the deal we can both do very nicely for ourselves."

"Why didn't you say so before," said Simon, "instead of breaking the thing like a fool?"

Palliser grinned in an unlovely fashion. "It'll be worth more to us broken than whole," he said.

"Us?" said Simon, quickly.

"Us," replied Palliser. "We'll form a nice quiet little partnership, you and me, and divide all profits."

"I bought the plate and it belongs to me," said Simon.

"Very well, then," said Palliser, with dignity. "You stick the bits together and sell it for what you can get."

Simon bit his lower lip thoughtfully. Then he turned and regarded the broken pieces of the egg-shell plate, which littered the floor. "It's a bargain," he said. "Give me threepence for half the capital I laid out and let's hear what you've got to say."

Palliser released his hold upon the glass case and stepped boldly into the open. "Now you are talking,' he said. "Shall we step into the parlour and discuss it quietly over a glass of whisky? We had better pick up those bits first, though."

When all the fragments had been carefully collected and placed in a quarto envelope, Simon led the way into the dusty little parlour behind the shop.

"First of all," said Palliser, drawing up a chair near the fire, "here is my threepence."

Simon transferred the coins to his own pocket without comment, whilst Palliser helped himself to a glass of whisky-and-water. "Now for it," he said.

The outline of the plan which he proceeded to sketch was remarkable at once for its simplicity, neatness, and entire lack of moral scruple.

Briefly, it was as follows:—

As previously stated, Palliser was possessed of an imitation egg-shell plate, similar, but not identical to the one whose destruction he had so recently encompassed. Viewed in a half-light by a short-sighted person, the substitute might well be mistaken for the genuine article. Upon these conditions the success of Palliser's scheme was hinged.

Lord Louis Lewis, though an excellent connoisseur, was unhappily afflicted with very indifferent vision. True, this defect was easily remedied by the use of thick crystal glasses. But these glasses were of a variety which

detracted in no small measure from the appearance of the wearer. Upon this point Lord Louis was disposed to be sensitive, and only wore them when actually required. Thus, should an object be unexpectedly thrust into his hands, one might reasonably expect a certain lapse of time to occur before his lordship would be in a position to bring to bear his critical capacity.

"Look here," said Simon. "What's all this leading up to?"

"This," said Palliser. "I'll go and see Lord Louis, and tell him you have a bit of egg-shell of the first quality which you want five hundred for."

"Five hundred?" said Simon.

"That's it," said Palliser. "Then I'll bring him along to have a look at it. After tea—twilight, d'y'see? Before he has got his glasses on, you'll give him the plate—my plate. On the underside of it we'll have fixed a bit of fine silk, the other end of which you'll hold. While his lordship is fumbling for his specs, you will give the silk a pull—and down comes the plate. Do it neat, and he'd never know it wasn't his own fault."

Simon glared. "What game?" he said. "You've only got one idea—to break everything."

"When a man breaks a thing," said Palliser, "it is up to him to buy it. That is, of course," he added, hurriedly, "providing he has the cash."

"Palliser," said Simon, "you are a fool. Do you think he'd pay five hundred for breaking a rotten fake that isn't worth half a dollar? Do you think he wouldn't want to take the pieces home and look 'em over?"

"You are forgetting the genuine one we packed in the envelope a minute ago," said Palliser, sweetly. "It oughtn't to be difficult to change the pieces of the plate he broke for the real one. See the idea?"

"I am beginning to," said Simon. Then, in a tone of admiration, "There is no getting away from it, Palliser, you are a man of ideas."

Palliser rubbed his bony knuckles and Simon poured out two stiff whiskies, with a generosity which rarely characterized his actions.

Under the influence of the spirit the plan was discussed from every aspect. The minutest details were sand-papered to so fine a surface as to admit no possibility of failure. It was decided that after the plate had been given to Lord Louis, he should be asked to switch on the light. This would ensure that he held it only by one hand.

A fine gut fishing-cast was to be substituted for the silk, as being less likely to tangle or break. One end of this was to be affixed to the rim of the plate with a seal of white wax. It was to be Simon's task to pull the cast at the psychological moment.

There followed a period of haggling as to the division of spoils. Palliser stoutly adhered to his original claim for half; and, in view of the fact that nothing could be achieved without the duplicate plate, Simon was forced to agree. An agreement was duly drawn up to that effect, to which they both affixed their signatures.

At four-thirty on the following afternoon Palliser presented himself at Lord Louis' abode.

His response to Palliser's inquiries as to how he did was courteous if not effusive.

"Very well, I thank you," he said. "Do I gather from your presence that you have found something likely to interest me?"

"I have indeed," replied Palliser. "There is a bit of china down-town which I am sure your lordship would be glad to have."

"Egg-shell?" asked Lord Louis.

"Of the very finest quality," said Palliser. "A plate," he added; "and the decoration is some of the best I have ever seen."

From his waistcoat pocket Lord Louis produced his spectacle-case.

"Let me see it," he was pleased to remark.

"Unfortunately," said Palliser, "that's just what I can't. The plate is down at Simon Caleb's. It was left to him by an uncle, who died a few days ago." This falsehood was inspired by Lord Louis' irritating curiosity as to the origin of all his purchases. They had congratulated themselves that this bereavement would prove an admirable blind.

Lord Louis clicked his tongue sympathetically. "And you think this plate would attract me?" he said.

"I know it would," said Palliser. "The two shades of gilding alone are worth the money, and held up to the light——"

Lord Louis broke in. "You have omitted to mention the price," he said.

"Five hundred is what he asked," said Palliser, clearing his throat.

His lordship raised his eyebrows. "A high figure," he remarked. "It must indeed be a remarkable piece to justify such a demand. Perhaps Mr. Caleb would be prepared to accept less."

Palliser shook his head dubiously. "Caleb is a funny man," he said. "Cute, mind you, but, if you understand me, funny."

"A rare combination," remarked Lord Louis.

"It is," said Palliser, deferentially. "I don't know whether your lordship is free this afternoon, but, if so, perhaps you would care to take a look at the plate."

Lord Louis glanced at his watch. "I had an appointment," he said, "but it is immaterial. If you will wait until I have made a telephone-call I shall be pleased to accompany you."

Palliser rose to his feet as Lord Louis, carrying gloves and a cane, re-entered the apartment.

They found Simon Caleb standing behind his counter when they arrived and Palliser greeted him warmly.

"This is Mr. Caleb, your lordship," he said. "Simon—here is Lord Louis Lewis, who kindly wants to have a look at that egg-shell plate."

"Mr. Palliser informs me that it is a very rare specimen," said Lord Louis.

"And so it is," said Simon. "But I haven't made up my mind that I want to sell it."

"In which respect you are not peculiar," said Lord Louis. "I have yet to meet the dealer who did not preface a sale with precisely that remark."

The unexpected nature of this comment temporarily deprived Simon of a fitting reply.

"Come, come, your lordship," said Palliser, "that's hardly fair. You forget this plate is a sort of an heirloom. Been in the family for fifty years. Mr. Caleb, here, was very fond of his poor uncle. Isn't that right, Simon?"

Below the level of the counter Simon was winding a small piece of catgut round the first finger of his left hand.

"He was always good to me," he said, with growing sentiment, "always—and that's where it is. Still, there'd be no harm in your having a look, would there?"

Lord Louis tucked his malacca cane under his right arm and placed his gloves upon the counter.

"That is the precise purpose of my visit," he said.

Simon stooped and took the plate from a shelf beneath him. He was careful to hold it at the exact spot where the gut-cast had been sealed on to the rim.

"Here you are, then," said he, and drew a deep breath for the coming ordeal.

Lord Louis Lewis took the plate in his right hand, holding it lightly as such delicate ware demands.

"It feels a trifle heavy," he remarked, balancing it on the tips of his fingers. "I'll just put on my glasses."

"Very dark in here," said Palliser, who had joined Simon behind the counter.

"There is a switch at your elbow, my lord," said Simon, indicating the spot.

"Let me," said Palliser.

"Pray do not disturb yourself," Lord Louis remarked; "I can manage very well myself." He took a step towards the switch, the plate perilously poised upon the extreme tips of his fingers. Immediately beneath his hand was the slab of green malachite upon which the genuine plate had met its fate. Beyond question the moment had arrived. Lord Louis had no sooner laid his hand upon the electric switch than Simon gave the cast a short but determined pull, at the same time releasing it at his end so that the fall should be undisturbed.

In a futile effort to save the plate Lord Louis' stick fell from beneath his arm and alighted, head downwards, upon the largest fragment. This added shock caused a shower of splinters to rise into the air and descend again over his lordship's boot, and thence to the floor.

"What have you done? What have you done?" yelled Simon, grovelling out through the flap-covered opening of the counter.

Lord Louis, after a violent effort to avert the disaster, immediately regained his dignity and raised himself to his full height.

"I cannot account for the accident in any way," he said. "It seemed to me as though the plate moved in my hand."

Simon was distraught. "A fine thing," he moaned, "to go smashing about like that!"

"Very unlucky," said Palliser, who, on hands and knees, was dragging the floor for the tell-tale cast, which, by good fortune, he found almost at once. "Most unlucky," and, rising to his feet, he placed his find, which during the fall had severed its connection with the plate, in a large brass bowl convenient to his hand.

"How did you come to do it?" said Simon, his voice rising to a shrill wail.

"I have said," replied Lord Louis, "that I am unable to account for the accident."

"You will have to," said Simon, emphasizing his words by a blow on the counter. "You'll have to account for it. Every penny—whether you like it or not!"

Lord Louis raised his hand in a gesture commanding silence. "I think," he said, "you forget the respect due to my station. Mr. Palliser will reassure you that I am the last man in the world who would permit your loss to go unindemnified. Please do

"'WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?' YELLED SIMON."

not address me again with such a lack of restraint."

"Well," said Simon, slightly mollified, "if your lordship speaks so fair, I am sure I apologize for giving offence."

"Then," said Lord Louis, "be so good as to collect those pieces and give them to me. If, after inspection, I find them to be of the first quality, I shall be pleased to pay any reasonable claim you may advance."

"I was going to ask five hundred for it," said Simon.

"The circumstances being as they are," said Lord Louis, "I am in no position to offer any comment."

"Simon," said Palliser, "take his lordship into the parlour. I'll make a parcel of these pieces, my lord, as perhaps you'd like to look 'em over at home."

"That will suit me very well," said Lord Louis, "especially as I have omitted to bring my cheque-book."

Simon led the way into the parlour. Here he exerted himself to the utmost to reduce the effect of his recent outburst.

In a few moments Palliser returned with a

packet containing the broken pieces of the genuine plate. The substitute had, by this time, been carefully secreted under the counter.

Lord Louis took the parcel and his departure. He had arranged, the next day being Sunday, that Palliser and Simon should call for their cheque on Monday morning. Despite his outward calm he was by no means satisfied that the accident was fortuitous. His sensitive finger-tips had been conscious of a sensation of liveliness on the part of the plate—as though it moved of its own accord. That this feeling was the result of imagination he was bound to believe. He was quite by himself at the time of the accident. The nearest of the two dealers was more than six feet away. And yet——

Then, again, the price was very high. Even assuming the plate to have been of the finest quality, five hundred pounds was a great deal to pay. Indisputably, it was a most unsatisfactory episode.

There is, however, a bright side to everything, and what Lord Louis lacked in gaiety was more than counterbalanced by the satisfaction experienced by the firm of Palliser and Caleb. From start to finish no single hitch had occurred to mar the complete success of their operations.

Arrived at his home Lord Louis partook of a modest repast, and after a glass of light port and a couple of walnuts he proceeded to reassemble the pieces of the broken plate. With the aid of a strong adhesive and an infinite fund of patience, the difficult task was completed. It was, indeed, a beautiful example of porcelain—and yet, strangely enough, familiar. Somewhere he had seen this plate before. He knew it well—every detail of it: that girl riding upon the ass; the grotesque male figure with the porcupine beard; the two shades of gilding in the vine pattern encircling the rim. There was no room for doubt, this plate was one which had been stolen from his own collection some twelve years before. Yet Simon had said that it had belonged to his uncle, who had treasured it for half a century. That was odd. Then, in a flash, a tiny and long-disused cell in Lord Louis' brain awoke, and he knew, if this was indeed his plate, there would be a series of small pinholes on the back, in much the same formation as the constellation of Cassiopeia.

He reversed the plate, and there were the pinholes, just as he remembered them.

This discovery finally disproved the truth of the uncle story. Lord Louis had always accounted for the disappearance of the plate by the theory that one of the maid-servants had broken it and, rather than confess to her carelessness, had hidden all traces of what had occurred by throwing away the pieces. The possibility of theft had never crossed his generous mind. In the light of recent events, however, he decided to ask his housekeeper what servants had been living at the house when the loss had occurred.

He rang the bell and commanded the man who answered it to summon Mrs. Swan. When this good lady arrived he at once put the question to her.

Mrs. Swan pursed her lips in thought. "I couldn't exactly say," she said, "not without looking at my book."

When the book was forthcoming it was ascertained that a maid, named Ann Minter, had left their employ through ill-health a few days after the plate had been found missing. She was a Bristol girl, and had given her aunt's address when writing for a character.

Lord Louis made a note of the address, thanked Mrs. Swan, and sallied forth to pay a late call upon Ann Minter's aunt.

He was somewhat embarrassed at finding the lady in bed and suffering from acute phthisis, so he lost no time in explaining the object of his visit. Removing the wrapping he held up the plate for her inspection, at the same time asking her if she had ever seen it before.

Mrs. Minter confessed that she had, adding that she had sold it to a dealer some four days previously for the sum of sixpence. Lord Louis received this news with just indignation. He inquired after the niece, and was further distressed to hear of her premature demise. Having left a sovereign upon the invalid's counterpane he bade her farewell.

One thing was evident: Simon Caleb was not above practising deceptions. He had wilfully misrepresented the true origin of the plate and had imposed upon the previous owner with a shameful disregard for honesty. Even though circumstances should compel him to write Simon Caleb a cheque for five hundred pounds, Lord Louis determined that half that sum should be made over to the old lady.

Having arrived at this resolve he dismissed the subject from his thoughts and directed his footsteps towards the Conservative Club, where he played two-hundred-up at billiards with a casual acquaintance. Incidentally this person was also a lover of Oriental porcelain.

It was during the course of this game that

another link was forged in the chain of evidence against Simon Caleb and his partner.

Refusing to make use of the long rest, Lord Louis was sprawling over the table to accomplish a difficult shot, the whole of his body, with the exception of his feet, being disposed upon the green cloth. At the critical moment, before the stroke was made, he experienced a sharp pain just above his right ankle. The company being exclusively male, Lord Louis permitted himself the luxury of a small licence in speech.

"Anything the matter?" demanded the friend.

"Something pricked me," said Lord Louis. He swung round to a sitting posture and bared his leg, to find that he was bleeding from a small but jagged cut.

"How very odd!" he said, and felt over the surface of his sock. "There is nothing here that could have done this."

"Maybe a nail has dropped into the cuff of your trouser," suggested the friend.

"Possibly," said Lord Louis, and turning it down revealed a triangular piece of porcelain about an inch long. "Dear me!" he said. "How did this get here? Ah! I know. I smashed a plate to-day, and one of the pieces must have slipped here unnoticed."

"That's it," said the friend, and taking the fragment held it up to the light. "Hum!" he commented. "You didn't lose much when you broke this. Japanese imitation of egg-shell, is it not?"

"On the contrary," said Lord Louis, rather coldly. "It is one of the finest specimens I have had the good fortune to examine. I have the rest of the plate here, if you would care to see it." He undid the parcel and placed the plate in his friend's hands.

"You have cemented it already?" remarked that gentleman.

"Yes," said Lord Louis, unexpectedly adding, "Good heavens!" For it suddenly occurred to him that the plate before him, so far as the actual number of pieces was concerned, was intact. There was no room for another fragment.

When he had explained the reason for his ejaculation, his companion was duly astonished. Lord Louis took the lately-discovered piece and examined it minutely. "You were right," he said. "This is common Japanese." He turned it over in his hand. "Now what in the world is that for?" And he pointed to a seal of white wax, from which a short length of gut was protruding.

"Looks like a bit of fishing-cast," said the friend. "It's been broken off short, I should say. Surely no one would hang up a plate on thin stuff like that?"

Lord Louis' brows contracted. Dark thoughts were chasing through his brain. "With your permission," he said, "we will chalk up our scores and finish our game upon another occasion." Whereupon he wrapped up the plate, put the small piece in his waistcoat-pocket, and hurriedly left the club.

As has been hinted, Lord Louis Lewis was no fool, and when once he was fairly started upon a trail he followed it with commendable zeal. A closer examination of the morsel of china in his pocket revealed the fact that the cast had become kinked just where it joined the wax and had, in consequence, broken. From this observation he reconstructed, with unswerving perception, the whole scheme of which he was to have been the victim. He realized now why the shop had been unlighted; why the plate had been thrust into his hands so unceremoniously and before he had had time to affix his glasses. The sensation of the plate moving from his fingertips was easily explained. He smiled grimly at the recollection of having been lured into Simon's parlour. Obviously this was done that the exchange might be made between the real and the spurious plate. It was clear that some disaster had occurred to the genuine specimen before he had come upon the scene, and this plot had been hatched that the two dealers might be able to recover their loss at his expense.

Lord Louis carefully considered what course of action he should pursue. He disliked the idea of carrying the matter into a court of law on account of the publicity in which he would become embroiled. Consequently he decided to deal with it himself, and forthwith addressed a note to Simon and Palliser asking them to call on Monday at eleven-thirty.

Punctual to their appointment, they presented themselves, and after a few well-balanced phrases regarding the weather, Lord Louis begged Simon to present his account. When this had been placed in his hands, he adjusted his pince-nez and read the contents aloud:—

"Simon Caleb, Art Dealer. To Lord Louis Lewis, of Bruton House, Clifton. To breaking one Egg-shell Plate, value £500. Price £500."

He laid the bill upon his desk. "Mr. Caleb," he said, "you consider this claim to be a just and fair one?"

Simon hesitated. "Your lordship said you'd be willing to pay it," he remarked, rather huskily.

"I did," said Lord Louis. "But I merely wanted to know if your conscience was quite clear." Simon nodded and fixed his eyes on the picture-rail. "I understand," he continued, "that your reason for valuing the plate so highly is a family one. I am assuming that had it not been the property of your uncle you would have been willing to accept less."

"I might," said Simon; "but it's hard to say."

"It would only make the difference of a pound or two," said Palliser. "Four hundred and ninety-seven at the lowest."

Lord Louis arched his brows. "Do you only value your uncle's association at three sovereigns?" he asked.

"That's all," said Simon.

"You will forgive me if I speak bluntly," said Lord Louis. "But I have reason to believe that your uncle, whoever he may be, never had anything to do with this plate—that he exists merely as a figure of imagination. I beg you will not so forget yourself as to interrupt me. This plate was stolen from my collection, some twelve years back, by a maid-servant of the name of Ann Minter. You obtained it from her aunt at the price of sixpence."

Simon and Palliser gasped.

"I can substantiate every word I have uttered," said Lord Louis, leaning back in his chair.

"But even if it is true?" said Simon.

Lord Louis placed his finger-tips together. "You are doubtless aware it is my custom to insist upon a fair division of profits between the owner and the dealer in matters of this kind. I am afraid, Mr. Caleb, this will reduce your cheque to—let me see—two hundred and forty-eight pounds ten shillings. I am now going to fetch the plate. Pray excuse me if I leave you for a moment," and with a bow he withdrew.

"Here's a go!" said Palliser. "He'll stick to what he says. What are you going to do about it?"

"Nothing," said Simon. "You're the loser. Your share'll pay the old woman—not mine."

Palliser gripped him by the arm. "None of that," he said. "We are partners in this deal. Do one crooked thing and I'll show up the whole game."

Simon beat the air in impotent rage. "It's all your fault," he said. "You and your rotten plan."

"Don't make a row," said Palliser. "A hundred and fifty is better than nothing. Will you play fair?"

Simon threw back his head. "Fair!" he exclaimed. "Fair! You're a nice one to talk about fair."

At this juncture Lord Louis, carrying the cemented plate, re-entered the room.

"Well, gentlemen," said he, "what decision have you arrived at?"

"To accept the offer," said Palliser.

"Are you agreeable to that course, Mr. Caleb?" said Lord Louis, turning to Simon.

"I suppose so," growled that gentleman, upon whom Lord Louis' aphorisms on the subject of self-control had failed to make an impression.

"Capital," said Lord Louis. "We will now proceed with our next inquiry."

Palliser looked up quickly. "Next?" he queried.

"That is what I said," remarked Lord Louis. "Here I have the plate. You will see that, to the best of my ability, I have reassembled the broken pieces. Pray observe there is not a single splinter missing."

"It is marvellous how well your lordship has done the job," said Palliser, with an effort to appear appreciative.

Lord Louis smiled. "I am grateful for your good opinion," he said. "Now, gentlemen, it is here that I am in need of your advice. How comes it, since the plate is, in a sense, intact, that I find myself with a piece still left over?"

Simon swallowed heavily. "Can't say that I follow your lordship's meaning," said he.

Drawing from his pocket the fragment of china which had fallen into his trouser-leg, Lord Louis placed it before them.

"There!" said he. "I found this in the cuff of my trousers. It was not there when I entered your shop, for my clothes are carefully brushed in every part, but it *was* there soon afterwards. I think your imaginations will supply you with the circumstances which caused this piece of very indifferent Japanese to have arrived where I have indicated. I am also of the opinion that you could offer an excellent reason for the existence of this morsel of white wax on the underside of the rim, with the catgut attachment."

Palliser stooped and busied himself with his bootlaces. Simon rose and walked unsteadily towards the window.

"I await your explanation," said Lord Louis; then, as no answer came, he struck the table a heavy blow. With a fine disregard for trivialities he made no effort to stem the tide of ink which, as a result of his violence, flowed from the inverted pot.

"Your silence condemns you," he said. "You stand accused of a fraud both base and despicable. Such conduct cannot go unpunished. I have decided to act in the following way."

With inexorable justice Lord Louis commanded that each of the dealers should pay to the old lady from whom the plate had been obtained a sum of fifty pounds. Palliser's protest that he had no money was waved aside. Lord Louis reminded him that he was himself indebted to Palliser for much about that sum. This he proposed to pay, in person, to Ann Minter's aunt. Failing implicit obedience he would place the matter forthwith in the hands of the police.

"Though but little versed in the law," concluded Lord Louis, "I am confident you would both meet with a severe sentence"; adding, "Here is the sixpence which you paid to my late domestic's aunt, and I now consider myself relieved of all further liability in the matter."

There is but little more to narrate. The essence of attack being in surprise, Lord Louis' bombshell completely routed the two dealers, who, after accepting his terms, made their retreat with all available speed. Without a word having passed between them they took the road leading towards the suspension-bridge, and it was not until they had reached the dead centre of this interesting structure that the full blast of their feeling found expression.

The fight itself was more remarkable for its intensity than for any particular exhibition of skill.

In answer to the magistrates' inquiry the toll-keeper was unable to state which of the two combatants was the aggressor. The desire to kill appeared to be equally distributed. Other witnesses declared that had the parapet of the bridge been a few inches lower neither of the twain would have been alive to attend the court proceedings which occurred on the following day

"THE FULL BLAST OF THEIR FEELING FOUND EXPRESSION."

THE MATCH:
TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY.

By STACY AUMONIER.

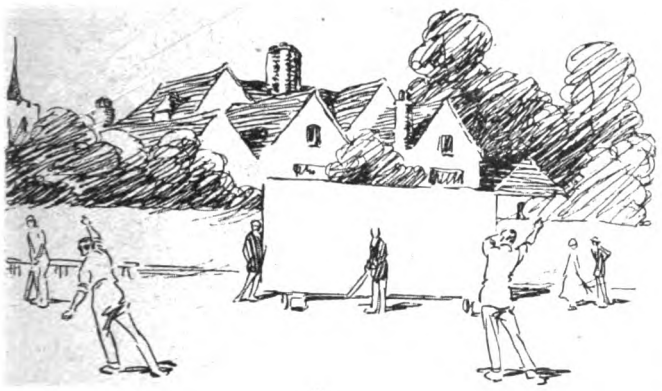
Illustrated by J. H. Thorpe.

IT is all so incredibly long ago that you must not ask me to remember the scores. In fact, even of the result I am a little dubious.

I only know that it was on just such a day as this that we were all mooning round Bunty Cartwright's garden after breakfast, smoking and watching the great bumble-bees hanging heavily on the flowers. Along the flagged pathway to the house were standard rose-trees, whose blossoms and perfume excited one pleasantly. It was jolly to be in flannels, and to feel the sun on one's skin, for the day promised to be hot.

I remember that for years it had been a tradition for Bunty to ask us all down for the week. There were usually eight or nine of us, and we made up our team with the doctor and his son, and one or two other odds and ends of chaps in the neighbourhood. I know that on this day he had secured the services of Dawkin, a very fast bowler from a town near by, for Celminster, the team we were to play, were reputed to be a very hot lot.

As we stood there laughing and talking (and Bunty and Tony Peebles were sitting within the stone porch, I remember, trying to finish a game of chess started the previous evening), there was the crunch of wheels on the road and the brake arrived, accompanied by the doctor's son, a thin slip of a boy, on a bicycle.



Then there was the usual bustle of putting up cricket-bags and going back for things one had forgotten, and the inevitable " chipping " of " Togs," a boy whose real name I have forgotten but who was always last in everything, even in the order of going in. It must have been fully half an hour before we made a start, and then the doctor hadn't arrived. However, he came up at the last minute, his jolly red face beaming and perspiring. Some of the chaps cycled and soon left us behind, but I think we were seven on the brake. It was good to be high up and to feel the wind blowing gently on our faces from the sea. We passed villages of amazing beauty nestling in the hollow of the downs, and rumbled on our way to the accompaniment of lowing sheep, and the doctor's rich burring voice talking of cricket, and the song of the lark overhead who sang in praise of this day of festival.

It was good to laugh and talk and to watch the white ribbon of the road stretching far ahead, then dipping behind a stretch of woodland. It was good to feel the thrill of excited anticipation as we approached the outskirts of Celminster. What sort of ground would it be? What were their bowlers like? Who would come off for us?

It was good to see the grinning friendly faces of the villagers, and to climb down from the brake, and to nod in that curiously self-conscious way we have as a race to our opponents, and then to survey the field. And is there in the whole of England a more beautiful place than the Celminster cricket-ground?

On one side is a clump of buildings dominated by the straggling yards and outhouses belonging to the Bull Inn. On the farther side is a fence, and just beyond a stream bordered by young willows. At right angles to the inn is a thick cluster of elms—a small wood, in fact—while on the fourth side a low grey stone wall separates the field from the road. Across the road may be seen the spire of a church, the fabric hidden by the trees, and away beyond the downs quiver in the sunlight.

In the corner of the field is a rough pavilion faced with half-timber, and a white flagstaff with the colours of the Celminster Cricket Club fluttering at its summit.

Members of the Celminster Club were practising in little knots about the field, and a crowd of small boys were sitting on a long wooden bench, shouting indescribably, and some were playing mock games with sticks and rubber balls. A few aged inhabitants looked at us with lazy interest and touched their hats.

A little man with a square chin and an auburn moustache came out and grinned at us and asked for " Mr. Cartwright." We discovered that he was the local wheelwright and the Celminster captain. He showed us our room in the pavilion and called Bunty " sir." Of course, Bunty lost the toss. He always did during that week, and this led to considerably more " chipping," and we turned out to field.

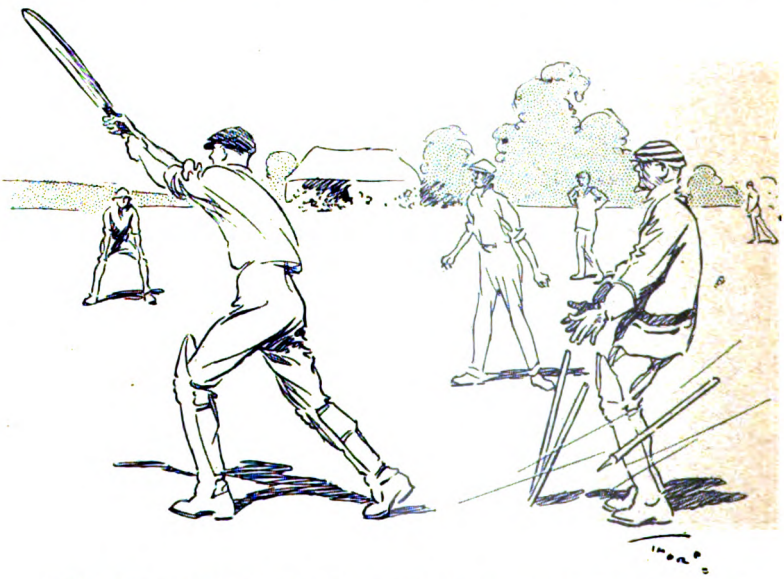
One who has not experienced it can never appreciate the tense joy of a cricketer when he comes out to commence a match: the gaiety of the morning when the light is at its best and all one's senses are alert, the glorious freedom of being in flannels and feeling the air on one's skin, the sense of being among splendid deeds that are yet unborn. And then the jolly red ball! How we love to clutch it with a sort of romantic exultation and toss it to each other! For it is upon *it* that the story of the day will turn. It is the scarlet symbol of our well-ordered adventure, as yet untouched and virginal, and yet strangely pregnant of unaccomplished actions. What story will it have to tell when the day is done? Who will drop catches with it? Who destroy its virgin loveliness with a fearful drive against the stone wall?

"HOW WE LOVE TO CLUTCH IT WITH A SORT OF ROMANTIC EXULTATION AND TOSS IT TO EACH OTHER."

As I have stated, it happened all so long ago that I cannot clearly remember many of the details of that match, but, curiously enough, I very vividly remember the first over that Dawkin sent down.

A very tall man came in to bat. The first ball he played straight back to the bowler, the second was a "yorker" and just missed his wicket, the third he drove hard to mid-off and Bunty stopped it, the fourth he stopped with his pads, the fifth he played back to the bowler again, and the sixth knocked his leg stump clean out of the ground.

One wicket for no runs! We flung the scarlet symbol backwards and forwards in a great state of excitement, with visions of a freak match, the whole side of our opponents being out for ten runs, and so on. I remember the glum face of their umpire, a genial corn-merchant, dressed in a white coat and a bowler hat, with a bewildering number of sweaters tied round his neck, glancing apprehensively at the pavilion. I remember that the next man in was the little wheelwright, and he looked very solemn and tense. The first three balls missed his wicket by inches, then he stopped them. My recollection of the rest of that morning was a vision of the little wheelwright, with his chin thrust forward, frowning at the bowlers. He had a peculiarly uncomfortable stance at the wicket, but he played very straight. He kept Dawkin out for about five overs, then he started pulling him round to leg. The wicket was rather fiery and Dawkin was very fast. The wheelwright was hit three times on the thigh, twice on the chest, and numberless times on the arms, and one ball got up and glanced off his scalp. But he did not waver. He plodded on, lying in wait for the short ball to hook to leg. I do not remember how many he made, but it was a great innings. He took the heart out of Dawkin, and encouraged one or two of the others to hit with courage. He was caught at last by a



"THE SIXTH KNOCKED HIS LEG STUMP CLEAN OUT OF THE GROUND."

brilliant catch by Arthur Booth running in from long leg.

One advantage of a village team like Celminster is that they have no "tail," or, rather, that you never know what the tail will do. You know they have a tail by the costume, for the first four or five batsmen appear in complete outfits of white flannels and sweaters, and then the costumes start varying in a wonderful degree. Number six appears in a black waistcoat with white flannel trousers; number seven with brown pads and black boots; number eight with a blue shirt and brown trousers, and so on to the last man, who is dressed uncommonly like a verger. But this *rallentando* of sartorial equipment does not in any way represent the run-getting ability of the team, for suddenly some gentleman inappropriately apparelled, who gives the impression of never having had a bat in his hand before, will lash out and score twenty-five runs off one over. On this particular occasion I remember one man who came in about ninth, and who wore one brown pad and sand-shoes, and had on a blue shirt with a dicky and a collar but no tie, and who stood right in front of his wicket, looked grimly at Dawkin, and then hit him for two boxes, a four, and a five, to the roaring accompaniment of "Good old Jar-r-ge!" from the row of small boys near the pavilion. The fifth ball hit his pad, and he was given out l.b.w. He gave no expression of surprise, disappointment, or disgust, but just walked grimly back to the pavilion. Celminster were all out before lunch, but I cannot let the last man—the verger—retire (he was bowled first ball off his foot) before speaking of our wicket-keeper, Jimmy Guilsworth.

"THEIR UMPIRE, A GENIAL CORN-MERCHANT, DRESSED IN A WHITE COAT AND A BOWLER HAT, WITH A BEWILDERING NUMBER OF SWEATERS TIED ROUND HIS NECK."

Jimmy Guilsworth was, in my opinion, an ideal wicket-keeper. He was a little chap and wore glasses, but his figure was solid and homely. He was by profession something of a poet, and wrote lyrics in the Celtic-twilight manner. He played cricket but seldom, but when he did he was instinctively made wicket-keeper. He had that curious sympathetic mothering quality which every good wicket-keeper should have. The first business of a wicket-keeper is to make the opposing batsmen feel at home. When the man comes in trembling and nervous, the wicket-keeper should make some assuring remark, something that at once establishes a bond of understanding between honourable opponents. When the batsman is struck on the elbow it is the wicket-keeper who should rush up and administer first aid or spiritual comfort. And when the batsman is bowled or caught, he should say, "Hard luck, sir!"

At the same time it is his business to mother the bowlers on his own side. He must be continually encouraging them and sympathizing with them, but in a subdued voice so that the batsman does not hear. And, moreover, he must be prepared to act as chief of the staff to the captain. He must advise him on the change of bowlers and on the disposition of the field. All of this requires infinite tact, understanding, and perspicacity.

All these qualities Jimmy Guilsworth had in a marked degree. If he sometimes dropped catches and never stood near enough to stump

anyone, what was that to the sympathetic way he said, "Oh, hard luck, sir!" to an opposing batsman when he was bowled by a slow long-hop, or the convincing way he would call out, "Oh, well hit, sir!" when another opponent pulled a half-volley for four. What could have been more encouraging than the way he would rest his hand on young Booth's shoulder, after he had bowled a disappointing over, and say, "I say, old chap, you're in great form. Could you pitch 'em up just a wee bit?" When things were going badly for the side Jimmy would grin and whisper into Cartwright's ear. Then there would be a consultation and a change of bowlers, or someone would come closer up to third man, and lo! in no time something would happen.

But it is lunch-time. In the pavilion a long table is set with a clean cloth and napkins and gay bowls of salad. On a side-table is a wonderful array of cold joints, hams, and pies. We sit down, talking of the game. Curiously enough, we do not mix with our

"HARD LUCK, SIR!"

opponents. We sit at one end and they occupy the other, but we grin at each other, and the men sitting at the point of contact of the two parties occasionally proffer a remark.

Some girls appear to wait, and a fat man in shirt-sleeves who produces ale and ginger beer from some mysterious corner. And what a lunch it is! Does ever veal-and-ham pie taste so good as it does in the pavilion after the morning chasing a ball? And then tarts and fruit and custard and a large yellow cheese, how splendid it all seems! The buzz of conversation and the bright sun through the open door. Does anything lend a fuller flavour to the inevitable pipe than such a lunch, mellowed by the rough flavour of a pint of shandy-gaff?

We stroll out again into the sun and puff tranquilly, and some of us gather round old Bob Parsons, the corn-merchant, and listen to his panegyric of cricket as played "in the old days." He's seen a lot of cricket in his time, old Bob. His bony, weather-beaten face wrinkles, and his clear, ingenuous eyes blink at the heavens as he recalls "Johnny Strutt, he was a good 'un. Aye, and ye should ha' seen old Tom Kennett bowl in his time—nine wicket he took agenst Kailhurst—hittin' the wood every toime. Fast he were, faster'n they bowl now. Fower bahls he bahl fast, then put up a slow."

He shakes his head meditatively, as though the contemplation of the diabolical cunning of bowling a slow ball after four fast ones were almost too much to believe, as though it were a demonstration of intellectual calisthenics that this generation could not appreciate.

It is now the turn of our opponents to take the field, whilst we eagerly scan the score-sheet to see the order of going in, and restlessly move about the pavilion, trying on pads and making efforts not to appear nervous.

And with what a tense emotion we watch our first two men open the innings! It is with a gasp of relief we see Jimmy Guilsworth cut a fast ball for two, and know at any rate we have made a more fortunate start than our opponents did.

I do not remember how many runs we made that afternoon, though, as we were out about tea-time, I believe we just passed the Celminster total, but I remember that Bunty Cartwright came off. He had been

unlucky all the week, but this was his joy-day. He seemed cheerful and confident when he went in, and he was let off on the boundary off the first ball! After that he did not make a mistake.

It was a joy to watch Bunty bat. He was tall and graceful, and he sprang to meet the ball like a wave scudding against a rock. He seemed to epitomize the dancing sunlight, a thing of joy expressing the fullness of the crowded hour. His hair blew over his face, and one could catch the gleam of satisfaction that radiated from him as he panted on his bat after running out a five.

He was not a great cricketer—none of us were—but he had a good eye, the heart of a lion, and he loved the game.

I believe I made eight or nine. I know I made a cut for four. The recollection of it is very keen to this day, and the satisfying joy of seeing the ball scudding along the ground a yard out of the reach of point. It made me very happy. And then one of those balls came along that one knows nothing about. How remarkable it is that a bowler who appears so harmless from the pavilion seems terrifying and demoniacal when he comes tearing down the crease towards you!

Yes, I'm sure we passed the Celminster total now, for I remember at tea-time discussing the possibilities of winning by a single innings if we got Celminster out for forty.

After tea, for some reason or other, one smokes cigarettes. We strolled into a yard at the back of the Bull Inn, and there was a wicket gate leading to a lawn, where some wonderful old men, whose language was almost incomprehensible, were drinking ale and playing bowls. At the side were some tall sunflowers growing amidst piles of manure.

Someone in the pavilion rang a bell, and we languidly returned to take the field once more.

I remember that it was late in the afternoon that a strange thing happened to me. I was fielding out in the long field not thirty yards from the stream. Tony Peebles was bowling from the end where I was fielding. I noted his ambling run up to the wicket and the graceful action of his arm as he swung the ball across. A little incident happened, a thing trivial at the time, but which one afterwards remembers. The batsman hit a ball rather low on the off-side, which the doctor's son caught or stopped on the ground. There was an appeal for a catch given in the batsman's favour. But for some reason or other he thought the umpire had said "Out," and he started walking to the pavilion. He was at least two yards out of his crease when the doctor's son threw the ball to Jimmy Guilsworth at the wicket. Jimmy had the wicket at his mercy, but instead of putting it down he threw it back to the bowler. It was perhaps a trivial thing, but it epitomized the game we played. One does not take advantage of a mistake. It isn't done.

"HE SEEMS TERRIFYING AND DEMONIACAL WHEN HE COMES TEARING DOWN THE CREASE!"

The sun was already beginning to flood the

valley with the excess of amber light which usually betokens his parting embrace. The stretch of level grass became alive and vibrant, tremblingly golden against the long, crisp shadows cast from the elms. The elms themselves nodded contentedly, and down by the stream flickered little white patches of children's frocks. Everything suddenly seemed to become more vivid and transcendent. As if aware of the splendour of that moment, all the little things struggled to express themselves more actively. The birds and insects in solemn unison praised God, or rather, to my mind, at that moment, they praised England, the land that gave them such a glorious setting.

The white-clad figures on the sunlit field, the smoke from the old buildings by the inn trailing lazily skywards, the comfortable buzz of the voices of some villagers lying on their stomachs on the grass. Ah, my dear land!

I don't know how it was, but at that moment I felt a curious contraction of the heart, like one who looks into the face of a lover who is going on a journey. Perhaps a townsman gets a little tired at the end of a day in the field, or the feeling may have been due to the Cassandra-like dirge of a flock of rooks that swung across the sky and settled in the elms.

The bat, cut from a willow down by the stream, the stumps, the leather ball, the symbol of the wicket, the level lawn cut and rolled and true—all these things were redolent of the land we moved on. They spoke of the love of trees, and wind, and sun, and the equipoise of man in Nature's setting. They symbolized our race, slow-moving and serene, with a certain sensuous joy in movement, a love of straightness, and an indestructible faith in custom. Ah, that the beauty of that hour should fade—that the splendour and serenity of it all should pass away! Strange waves of misgiving flooded me.

If it should be all *too* slow-moving, *too* serene! If at that moment the wheels of the Juggernaut of evolution were already on their way to crush the splendour of it beneath their weight!

Ah, my dear land! If you should be in danger! If one day another match should come, in which you would measure yourself against—some unknown terrors! I was conscious at that moment of a poignant sense of prayer that when your trial should come it should find you worthy of the clean sanity of that sunlit field, and if in the end you should go down, as everything in Nature *does* go down before the scythe of Time, the rooks up there in the elms shall cry aloud your epitaph. They are very old and wise, these rooks; they watched the last of the Ptolemys pass from Egypt, they moaned above Carthage and Troy, and warned the Roman prætors of the coming of Attila. And the epitaph they shall make for you—for *they* saw the little incident of Jimmy Guilsworth and the doctor's son—shall be, "Whatever you may say of these English, they played the game. . . ."

I think those small boys down by the pavilion made too much fuss about the catch I muffed. Of course I *did* get both hands to it, and as a matter of fact the sun was *not* in my eyes, but I think I started a bit late, and it seemed to be screwing horribly. Ironical jeers are not comforting. Bunty, like the dear, good sportsman he is, merely called out, "Dreaming there?"

But it was a wretched moment. I remember slinking across at the over, feeling like an animal that has contracted a disease and is ashamed to be seen, and my mental condition was by no means improved by the cheap sarcasms of young Booth or Eric Ganton. We did not get Celminster out for the second time, and the certainty that the result would not be affected by the second innings led to the introduction of strange and unlikely bowlers being put on and given their chance. I remember that just at the end of the day even young "Togs" was tried. He sent down three most extraordinary balls that went nowhere within reach of the batsman, the fourth was a full pitch, and a young rustic giant who was then batting promptly hit it right over the pavilion.

The next ball was very short and came on the leg-side. I was fielding at short leg and I saw the batsman hunching his shoulders for a fearful swipe. I felt in a horrible funk. I heard the loud crack of the ball on the willow and I was aware of it coming straight at my head. I fell back in an ineffectual sort of manner and despairingly threw up my hands in self-defence. And then an amazing thing happened. The ball went bang into my left hand and stopped there. I slipped and fell, but somehow I managed to hang on to the ball. I remember hearing a loud shout, and suddenly the pain of impact vanished in the realization that I had brought off a hot catch. It was a golden moment. The match was over. I remember all our chaps shouting and laughing, and young "Togs" rushing up and throwing his arms round me in a mock embrace. We ambled back to the pavilion, and it suddenly struck me how good-looking most of our men were, even Tony Peebles, whom I had always

looked upon as the plainest of the plain. My heart warmed towards Bunty with a passionate zest when he struck me on the back and said, "Good man! You've more than retrieved your muff in the long field."

I know they ragged me frightfully in the pavilion when we were changing, but it was no effort to take it good-humouredly. I felt ridiculously proud.

We took a long time getting away. There was so much rubbing down and talking to be done, and then there was the difficulty of getting Len Booth out of the Bull Inn. He had a romantic passion for drinking ale with the yokels, and a boy had stuck a pin into one of Ganton's tyres, and he had to find a bicycle shop and get it mended. It was getting dark when we all eventually got established once more in the brake.

I remember vividly turning the corner in the High Street and looking back on the solemn profile of the inn. The sky was almost colourless, just a glow of warmth, and already in some of the windows lamps were appearing. We huddled together contentedly in the brake, and I saw the firm lines of Bunty's face as he leaned over a match, lighting his pipe. . . .

The grass is long to-day in the field where we played Celminster, and down by the stream are two square, unattractive buildings covered by zinc roofing, where is heard the dull roar of machinery. The ravages of Time cannot eradicate from my memory the vision of Bunty's face leaning over his pipe, or the pleasant buzz of the village voices as we clattered amongst them in the High Street, or the sight of the old corn-merchant's face as he came up and spoke to Bunty (Bunty had stopped the brake to get more tobacco), and touched his hat and said:—

"Good-noight, sir, and good luck to 'ee!"

Decades have passed, and I have to press the spring of my memory to bring these things back, but when they come they are very dear to me.

I know that in the wind that blows above Gallipoli you will find the whispers of the great Faith that Bunty died for! Eric Ganton, young Booth, and Jimmy Guilsworth, where are they? In vain the soil of Flanders strives to clog the free spirit of my friends.

"Good-noight, sir, and good luck to 'ee!"

Again I see the old man's face as I gaze across the field where the long grass grows, and I see the red ball tossed hither and thither, with its story still unfinished, and I hear the sound of Jimmy's voice:—

"Oh, well hit, sir!" as he encourages an opponent.

The times have changed since then, but you cannot destroy these things. Manners have changed, customs have changed, even the faces of men have changed; and yet this calendar on my knee is trying to tell me that it all happened *two years ago to-day!*

And overhead the garrulous rooks seem strangely flustered.

"CARROTS."

By B. PAUL NEUMAN.

Illustrated by Alfred Leete.

I.

"COME in!" Charles Langridge called out, in his usual weak, worried voice.

The door burst open, and a small but fierce-looking page-boy burst in.

"Wickens," remonstrated the young man, with extreme mildness, "how often have I begged you——"

"Beg pardon, sir. Very sorry, sir. Gentleman, sir——"

Before Wickens could finish his sentence he was swept aside by a young khaki-clad officer.

"Halloa, Charlie, my boy!" shouted the intruder. "I've found you, then, after all. What a piece of luck! If I hadn't caught sight of you yesterday turning in here, I should never have run you down. I was in a taxi, too, but I spotted that little stoop, and the walk, and all. 'That's Cockie Langridge, or I'm a Dutchman,' I said to myself. Dear old Cockie! Waggle fins."

By this time Langridge was on his legs, and the two young men shook hands heartily. They were a striking contrast. The visitor was tall and broad, tanned by sun and wind, and evidently fit to run for his life. His features were regular and pleasing, and he had a roguish eye.

Langridge, on the other hand, was a slight, fair, decidedly good-looking young fellow, but with a nervous, diffident air and a melancholy expression. The room was large and handsomely furnished. The open piano with a volume of Beethoven on the stand, the water-colours and etchings on the walls, and the books on the shelves and lying about on the tables, all bore witness to the occupier's refinement and good taste.

"My dear Rupert," he said, "I'm very glad to see you, I am indeed."

The words were cordial, and so was the smile that accompanied them, yet the speaker seemed slightly embarrassed and ill at ease.

"I'm sure you are," answered the other, "though I can't say you look it. May I sit down?"

"Oh, of course," said Charles, quite flustered. "I'm sure I beg your pardon."

"Now tell me all the news," demanded Captain Rupert Heygill. "Where the dickens have you been hiding all these ages, and why?"

Charles Langridge sat down and leaned back in his chair, and his expression became at once more natural and even more melancholy.

"I've been hiding—just here," he answered, "and you know the reason quite well."

"No, I'm hanged if I do," exclaimed Rupert, loudly. Then, as if something had suddenly occurred to him, he hesitated, and the boisterous cheerfulness died out of his voice. "You never mean to say that that old trouble made you keep to yourself all this time?"

"Old trouble!" repeated the other, bitterly, and as he spoke he rose and began to pace up and down the room. "Do you think one forgets that kind of disgrace in five minutes? My father was a bankrupt. Do you know what dividend he paid? Do you know what they said in the papers? I've got them all here." He pointed to a drawer in the writing-table.

By this time Rupert had recovered himself.

"No, of course I don't know all that," he replied. "And equally of course I don't care. I have a sort of general impression that the old gentleman came a bit of a cropper, but I remember he used to tip me like a Briton, and that's good enough for me. Besides, you're not responsible for him."

The gloom deepened on Charles's face.

"'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge,'" he quoted, solemnly.

Rupert looked a little ashamed of himself.

"Say that again, will you?" he asked. "I haven't read a line of Shakespeare since I left school. What was it?"

" Oh, never mind," answered Charles, impatiently. " Tell me about yourself."

But the young officer had been looking round the room.

" I say, Cockie," he remarked, " this doesn't look much like bankruptcy."

" Oh, that's Aunt Susan's doing. She left me a pot of money."

" That's the sort ! " cried Rupert, enthusiastically. " I only wish we'd got one or two Aunt Susans in *our* family."

" It did make a difference," Charles admitted. " I was able to pay all the creditors in full."

" You did ? Good old Cockie ! Then what the dickens is there to grouse about ? If I'd done a sporting thing like that, I should want to put an advertisement in the *Times*."

Charles shook his head with resolute dejection.

" Ah, you can't understand. There are some stains that won't wash out. If I meet people I used to know, I can *hear* them saying to themselves, ' His father was a——' Pah ! I've said the word once, and it scorches my tongue. Why, you're thinking it now—you know you are."

" Of course I am, when you've just been dinning it into my ears. If you hadn't, I should never have given it a thought. Do you really mean to say you've cut all your old friends ? "

" Or they've cut me. It isn't only—what I've just told you. Apart from that, I'm not fit for society. I'm nervous, and shy, and awkward. I'm miserable myself, and I make other people miserable. Why, even King George wouldn't have me. He said one knee didn't come up to sample, so I wasn't worth two-and-ninepence."

Rupert looked serious.

" Poor old chap ! " he exclaimed, sympathetically. " That *was* beastly rough. But look here," he went on, more briskly, " all that about not being fit for society is pure piffle. The fact is, you've been coddling yourself, and you've caught a bad cold in the character. What you want to do is to throw the doors wide open, walk out, slap every Johnny you meet on the back, and talk to every pretty girl. Have you really no friends ? "

" None," answered Charles, gloomily. " There's not a soul comes here from week's end to week's end. Ask Wickens."

" Oh, no," said his friend. " Your word's quite good enough, backed, as it is, by your gay and festive countenance. Well, I'm jolly glad I've found you, Cockie, for I'm off to somewhere in somewhere next week, and one never knows what may happen."

Something in his visitor's voice touched Charles.

" Dear old Rupe ! " he exclaimed. " I *am* glad to see you."

" Halloa ! That's a sneeze ! " cried Rupert. " An encouraging symptom, so a Harley Street fakir once told me. Now we'll have a decent dinner somewhere, and an evening at home, or shall we wind up at one of the halls ? "

" No," answered Charles, with a sudden burst of energy. " Not even with you. I hate the ghastly mummery."

" Oh, lor' ! That's sneeze number two. All right. We'll have a good gossip over our pipes."

" I've given up smoking," said Charles, gravely.

Rupert pulled out a fat cigarette-case.

" Well," he remarked, " you've got to take to it again for once. What's the matter ? "

The question was suggested by the discomposure that showed on Charles's face.

" My dear fellow," he said, nervously, " if you don't mind—I'm really very sorry—but I'd much rather you didn't smoke in here."

Rupert sighed

" Look here, Cockie," he said ; " you may be eccentric, but you mustn't be unreasonable. Here am I tethered to this chair for three hours at least, and you coolly ask me to follow your own pernicious and ridiculous example."

Charles looked still more uncomfortable.

" I wouldn't—I—I'm really most awfully sorry," he stammered, " but—er—well, the fact is, I'm expecting a visitor."

" A visitor ! I thought hermits didn't go in for visitors. Is it a he or a she ? "

Charles Langridge came to the rug and took up a dignified position with his back to the fire. He even tried to straddle, and he made a desperate effort to speak with ease and confidence.

" Well, as a matter of fact," he said, " it happens to be a she."

With a great shout of laughter Rupert sprang up and held out his hand.

" Ha ! ha ! ha ! Oh, dear ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! Shake hands again, old sport. Why, you really did take me in. ' Not a soul from week's end to week's end.' Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! You *are* a surprise packet, Cockie, you know. Is she young and pretty, or old and rich ? "

Charles ignored the outstretched hand.

" I wish you'd try to behave like a sane

person," he answered, quite tartly. "I don't know."

"You don't know! Do you know her name?"

Charles took out a letter from his breast-pocket and glanced at it.

"E 203," he read.

Rupert looked bewildered.

"Eh? What did you say?" he asked.

"E 203," Charles repeated.

Captain Heygill laughed.

"Oh, I see!" he exclaimed. "French poodle or blue Persian, which is it?"

Langridge made no direct answer. He drew a chair to the fire opposite his visitor, and sat down.

"Look here, Rupe," he began, "I meant to break with all the past, but you've taken me by storm, and I don't want you to think me—well, what I know you *are* thinking me. Mind, I don't wonder in the least. A man whose father——"

"Hi! Stop that, old man," Rupert interrupted. "You're getting in a draught again. Go on with what you were saying."

"I was just going to explain to you about this visitor."

"Right-o! D'you think she'd mind just one Sullivan?"

"WELL, AS A MATTER OF FACT, IT HAPPENS TO BE A SHE."

"I'm afraid she might. But we can go into my little den over there." He pointed to a door opposite the fireplace.

But the captain shook his head.

"No, thanks," he said. "I'm jolly comfy here, and it won't take long, will it?"

"Not a couple of minutes. Do you know the *Family Adviser?*"

"Mrs. Beeton, do you mean?"

"No, no—the paper—this." He walked across to the table, took up a file of papers, and sat down again. "I came across it at my dentist's."

"That would have set me against it for ever," remarked Captain Heygill.

"Well, there was one column that happened to catch my eye and interested me tremendously. People, perfect strangers, you know, lonely people, misunderstood, disappointed, disillusioned, people with secret troubles——"

Rupert held up a warning finger.

"Steady there!" he exclaimed. "Keep out of the draught. I can feel it blowing."

Charles smiled faintly.

"All right. Well, these people write, describing themselves and their circumstances and asking sympathetic souls to correspond with them. They don't give their names—not at first, at any rate. Just a letter and a number."

"Oh, I see now! Miss E 203 is *your* sympathetic soul?"

"I hope so. She writes very sweetly."

"M'yes. It's a charming name. How did you land her? Have you got the bait there?"

"My advertisement, do you mean? Yes, here it is. Shall I read it? As you know so much, you may as well know all."

Rupert nodded, and Charles, after a little hunting in the file, found the page and read impressively:—

"*Bachelor* (28), *lonely, unprepossessing in appearance, shy and awkward in manner, heavily handicapped by family troubles, well-to-do, but unable to find satisfaction in material prosperity, a failure in everything he undertakes, rejected as recruit on account of ill-health. Will any young lady, bright, pretty, clever, accomplished, vivacious, yet deeply sympathetic*——"

" You do want a good lot for your twopence, Cockie, don't you?" Rupert interjected.

" ——*take pity on him*," the reader went on, " *and enter into correspondence?*"

" And what's *your* collar got on it?" Rupert asked. " What's your number?"

" Oh, Z 99."

" And what did E 203 say?"

Charles shook his head.

" Ah, that I can't read. It's too intimate."

" Oh, Cockie, for shame! At this stage, too!"

" Too sacred."

" Oh, dear! This is getting serious."

At this moment a big grandfather's clock began chiming four. Captain Heygill pulled out his watch and jumped up.

" By Jove! I'd clean forgotten," he exclaimed. " I promised my sister I'd meet her at the corner, by four sharp. She's been shopping in Sloane Street, and I told her to get me a little souvenir for you, old chap. She's a daisy at the job, and I'm no good at all. I expect she's holding a commination service there now. I say, shall I bring her up? She remembers you quite well. She says you used to be awfully good to her. She was in short frocks then; the third—you know—Ethel—' Carrots ' we used to call her, because her hair was a bit sunsetty then. She's the pick of the basket now—present company excepted, of course. I'll have her up in a jiffy."

Again embarrassment showed on Charles Langridge's face.

" My dear Rupe," he said, " pray don't misunderstand me. I'd dearly like to see her, but I really, honestly couldn't bear to see two of the old set again in a single afternoon. I know you must think me off my head, but I can't help it if you do. I really couldn't bear it. It's quite impossible. The moment she came in I should know exactly what she was thinking."

" I can tell you exactly what she'd think if she heard you now. She'd think—and probably say—that you were a dear, thundering old ass."

" I know I *am* a thundering ass, but we don't make our own ears. It's awfully good of you to suggest bringing her, but the pleasure would be too great—I couldn't bear it. Besides, you know, my visitor may be here any moment. She said between four and five."

The young officer smiled good-humouredly.

" All right, Cockie," he said. " It's a shame to bait you. I'll make it straight with her. She's an understanding little cuss if you take her the right way. Ta-ta, for the present. I'll be back in ten minutes."

Charles looked greatly relieved.

" Thanks awfully. If you do say anything about me, put it as nicely as ever you can. I remember her perfectly now. I used to think her the jolliest schoolgirl I'd ever met. And Rupe, if my visitor should be here when you come back, you won't mind going straight into that little den of mine, will you? Wickens'll show you—I'll tell him. You can smoke in there to your heart's content."

" Right you are," said Rupert, as he opened the door. " Good luck with Miss E, *et cetera*."

II.

LEFT to himself, Charles Langridge again unfolded his precious letter and re-read it. Over certain passages he lingered.

" *Your letter has been a revelation to me of the true, deep, affectionate man-heart. It needs the faithful, sympathetic woman-heart to compliment it.*"

He looked up with a smile.

" That 'i' is a funny little slip, and yet I dare say the statement's true as it stands."

" *The written word is cold and dead. I feel that if we speak with one another we shall touch a deeper depth.*"

" OVER CERTAIN PASSAGES HE LINGERED."

" That's not exactly what she meant to say," he commented, " but how divinely naive and girl-like! I can fancy her dark and slim, pensive and gentle. I feel that I should have no difficulty in telling *her* the accursed secret that has poisoned my life."

He kissed the letter and replaced it in his pocket. Then he walked round the room, tidying it with finicking carefulness. He paused at the mirror in the overmantel to smooth his hair and adjust his tie. After which he rang the bell.

Wickens answered with his usual ferocious abruptness, and this time his master was too much preoccupied to utter his wonted protest.

"Listen to me, Wickens," he said, "and pay attention. I am expecting a visitor."

"Another visitor, sir!" exclaimed the boy, in great astonishment.

"Yes, another visitor—a lady this time. Don't ask her name, but just show her in; say, 'A lady to see you, sir.' And when that gentleman who has just gone comes back, as he will soon, show him into the small room. Bring in one tray here and take another in there for Captain Langridge—that's the gentleman's name. Do you quite understand, Wickens?"

"Yes, sir," answered the boy. "You and lady here. Captain in there. Two trays."

At that moment the outer bell rang and Wickens vanished. Charles had just time to pull himself together, sit down at his writing-table, and take up a book when the door opened, and Wickens announced, "The lady, sir."

Charles rose and came forward in haste to meet his visitor. He saw in a flash that she was quite young, beautifully dressed, and extremely pretty, though not quite in the way he had pictured her. He was really an exceedingly susceptible young man, and as he looked at her he felt that now he understood the meaning of love at first sight.

She came to meet him with a friendly smile and her hand stretched out.

"Mr. Z 99, I think?" she said, and they shook hands.

"Yes," he answered, and immediately added, "How good it is of you to honour me with this call!"

"Oh, that's nothing," she answered, as she sat down in the chair Captain Heygill had occupied a few minutes before. "You send out a sort of S.O.S. message. My wireless picks it up. Then I get up steam, and—here I am."

For a moment a sudden wave of happiness had carried Charles off his feet. Now, in the nick of time, he remembered his *rôle*.

"Just as I am ready to sink," he sighed.

"Up come the boats," she answered, briskly.

"A minute too late!" The sigh had become a groan.

"Rot!" she exclaimed, energetically.

He could hardly believe his ears.

"Eh? I beg your pardon."

"I said 'rot'!" Her voice was clear as a bell, but there was no hardness in it, only a cheery note that thrilled him in spite of his resolute depression. Still, he felt bound to protest.

"But really——" he began. She gave him no quarter.

"Well, isn't it?" she interrupted. "Here are you, rolling in money, dressed up to the nines, with every luxury that can spoil your digestion and ruin your wind, hugging a ridiculous imaginary trouble, and within a stone's throw there are scores of people wrung by real sorrows, tortured by real anxieties, and

"'MR. Z 99, I THINK?' SHE SAID."

yet going about with brave hearts and cheerful faces, doing their duty and helping their neighbours. Oh! I've no patience with you!"

In spite of the uncompromising words, she ended with a glint of fun in her eyes—partly, perhaps, at her own vehemence, partly at the rapid changes of emotion visible on Charles's face—astonishment, indignation, admiration, deprecation. The last was most in evidence as he began to defend himself.

" But, my dear friend, if I may call you so, you're rather hard on me. Within a stone's throw there are scores of homes far more luxurious than this little flat. I'm a most abstemious man, I really am. I live mainly on grape nuts, pine kernels, green vegetables, and protose. I've given up smoking. I've certainly put on my best clothes, but "—he smiled—" only to be rescued in. As for——"

Again she interrupted him.

" I say, I *was* a bit frothy just now," she admitted. " I'm sorry, and apologize. You're not half so bad as I thought you."

Charles looked, as he felt, absurdly pleased.

" It's very kind of you to put it like that," he said. " I wonder what has made you change your opinion?"

" Why, you've got some fun in you. The only hopeless characters are the people who can't see a joke. Now about the mysterious troubles. I know you're dying to tell me the secret, and, of course, I'm dying to hear it."

He looked a little apprehensive.

" You said "—he laid a slight emphasis on the word—" when you wrote, that your heart was overflowing with sympathy."

" So it is," she declared. " Sympathy's my long suit."

The young man's face lengthened again, and his voice grew solemn.

" Well," he began, " you remember the text, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes——'?"

She cut his quotation in half.

" Yes," she answered, " and Jeremiah says that's all wrong."

" Does he?" asked Charles, helplessly.

" Of course he does. You can't have me there. We had to do Jeremiah for the Senior Oxford."

Before Charles could make any reply, Wickens appeared, carrying a big tray laden with tea, sandwiches, cakes, meringues, and other deadly dainties. The moment he had left the room, the visitor jumped up and ran to the table where he had placed them.

" Oh, this *is* sweet of you, 99!" she exclaimed. " I was simply famishing. Meringues, too, and éclairs! How absolutely

" WICKENS APPEARED, CARRYING A BIG TRAY LADEN WITH TEA."

ripping! But, I say, where are your grape nuts? Aren't you going to have anything?"

" Ah, but this is a very special occasion," answered Charles, with a smile.

He poured out a cup of tea and moved the table close to her.

" Will you begin with a sandwich?" he asked.

" No, thanks. I think I'll start with a meringue, and work backwards. Is this the room where you read Jeremiah and write your advertisements?"

" No," he replied. " This is my company room. There is my little den." He pointed to the door opposite.

" Is it presentable?"

" Not very tidy, I'm afraid. There's generally a litter of books, papers, and letters."

" Jeremiah, the *Family Adviser*, and letters of sympathy?"

" Yours," he assured her, " is the first letter of sympathy I've ever had, and the only one I have kept. It is always here," he added, tapping his breast.

" I see—chest protector. Well, don't you think we should be more comfy in there?

I could no more be sympathetic in here than in one of Maple's show-rooms."

"By all means," he said, with something more than alacrity. "You must excuse a bachelor's untidiness."

"You needn't worry about that," she replied. "I've got brothers."

A sudden thought occurred to Charles. Rupert might have returned. He opened the door and looked in.

"Coast clear?" she asked, with a smile.

"It looks a bit littery," he answered, taking up the tray. "Shall I lead the way?"

"Secrets and sympathy, meringues and éclairs. This *is* a day out!" she exclaimed, as she followed.

III.

WHEN Captain Heygill returned to the flat, Wickens ushered him into the big room again.

"Please, sir," the boy said, "master is in the little room with a visitor. I'll bring in some tea in a minute."

"Has anyone called besides the lady that's with Mr. Langridge now?" Rupert inquired.

"No, sir."

"Well, I'm expecting a lady to call here any minute now——"

As he spoke the outer bell rang.

"Talk of an angel," he muttered, and walked out into the hall behind Wickens, who opened the door.

A lady stood on the threshold. Rupert stepped forward.

"All right," he said to Wickens. "Bring in the tea as soon as you can." Then he turned to the visitor.

"Miss E 203, I presume," he said, holding out his hand, with an affable smile.

She took his hand and summoned an answering smile, but beneath it lay doubt and suspicion.

He led the way into the room, closed the door, and begged her to be seated. She sank into an easy chair with a little sigh of relief that did not escape him, as he watched her attentively though unobtrusively.

She was short, stout, and would never, he felt sure, see forty again. She might once have been good-looking, but the features were a little coarse, and the complexion looked unwholesome in spite—or because—of the powder that had been rather unskilfully applied. But there were indications of energy in the dark, restless eyes that seemed to be taking stock of everything in the room.

"We might drop that nonsense now, don't you think, Mr. Langridge?" she began, abruptly. "Your name's outside, you know. My name is Ferrers—Evelina Ferrers. I didn't expect to see you in khaki. I thought you said you had been rejected."

Her voice was rather pleasant, but she spoke with curious deliberation, as if on constant guard.

"I managed to pass, after all," he replied.

"You are not in the least like what I expected to find you," she went on. "I do not think you described yourself at all fairly. I hope you have not been trying to take a rise out of me. You might not find it so very amusing after all, you know."

"'OH, THIS IS SWEET OF YOU, 99!' SHE EXCLAIMED. 'I WAS SIMPLY FAMISHING.'"

The menace in her tone was plain, but Rupert ignored it, and answered very smoothly:—

"My dear Miss Ferrers, I was never more serious in my life. Circumstances alter faces as well as cases."

Unconsciously his eyes were on the unfortunate

powder-patches. She felt the scrutiny, and, opening her bag, took out a lace-edged handkerchief and made furtive little dabs at her cheeks. Her voice was sharper as she demanded :—

"And what do you mean by *that*, sir?"

He still chose the soft answer.

"I only mean that going into the Army has bucked me up a lot. Losing my money seems a trifle now."

Just then Wickens burst into the room with another of his prodigious trays. A kindlier gleam lit the visitor's eyes as they rested on it. But the moment the door was closed she returned to business.

"Losing your money, did you say?"

"Yes. Didn't I tell you of my losses, in my last letter? But, there, what does it matter? I couldn't have taken this flat over to France, could I? And now it doesn't belong to me. Ah, well, if I come back, I shall be able to get some sort of berth in the City."

"Then you don't want any sympathy?"

"On the contrary, I think I want it more than ever, don't you?"

"Do you say you are going to France? When?" she snapped.

"In two or three days."

The barometer was falling and the temperature was rising. The woman's face began to twitch unpleasantly, and her fingers worked hard on the arms of the chair. When she spoke again her voice was shrill and all the deliberation had gone.

"And you've let me come traipsing over here all the way from Camden Town on a fool's errand? Do you know what you are? You're a beast and a cad!" And the tears began to roll down her raddled cheeks.

"Most men are, now and again," said Rupert, his voice changed too. He poured out a cup of tea, and brought it to her with a plate of cakes.

"There, Miss Ferrers," he went on; "I'm awfully sorry you should have come such a long way. A cup of tea'll do you all the good in the world. And do take a meringue."

She took the tea, but rejected the meringue.

"Not that muck," she said. "Give me some of those sandwiches—three or four. I tell you I'm hungry. I've walked all the way to save the fare, and I've wasted one-eleven-three on these gloves. You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"I'm beginning to be," Rupert answered. "Look here, Miss Ferrers, you're a business woman, I can see. Tell me straight out what you reckon would have made it worth your while to come over from Camden Town."

"'IMPUDENCE!' SHE CRIED, AND SLAPPED HIS FACE."

The expression of her face and her voice changed as if by magic.

"Ah, now you're talking," she said. "Make it a fiver, and I'll say you're a gentleman."

Captain Heygill took out a pocket-book and drew from it a note, which he handed to her.

"There's a tenner," he said, "with Charles Langridge's apologies."

She stood up and put down her cup, looked carefully at the note, and placed it in her bag. Then she looked up at the tall young soldier.

"Thank you, sir. You've been telling me a parcel of lies, and you're up to some hanky-panky that I don't understand, but you're a gentleman. I don't mind telling you now that I expected to find you a skinny, doddering little freak. You're not that, whatever you are. I suppose you want to be rid of me now. Good-bye. I like the look of you, young man."

She held out her hand, and, as he took it, she lifted her face.

"You can have one if you like," she said.

Rupert laughed.

"No, thank you, Evelina," he replied. "You mustn't get into a temper, but I don't quite like the way you put the powder on."

"Impudence!" she cried, and slapped his face. At the door she turned. "Good luck to you all the same!"

"Good-bye," he answered, rubbing his cheek. "I'm very glad we haven't quarrelled."

IV.

THE first thing Captain Rupert Heygill did on finding himself again in the big room alone was to take a cup of tea and a fair number of extras. Next he lighted a cigarette, walked on tip-toe to the door leading to what Charles had called his "den," opened it very gently, and set it well ajar. Then he retired to the middle of the room.

Immediately he heard the sound of two voices engaged in what was evidently a spirited and friendly conversation punctuated with laughter. He smiled in great content. "Halloa! Sympathy seems to be working well," he said to himself.

For a moment he hesitated. Then he gave a huge and noisy yawn. "Come along, Cockie," he shouted, in a stentorian bass, "and bring your friend with you. I've had quite enough of solitude."

Instantly there was silence. Then the door was flung wide and Charles Langridge appeared, unmistakably happy, but amazed and scandalized. Close behind him came his visitor, her eyes gleaming with mischievous fun.

The moment Rupert saw her he uttered a wild whoop and rushed to her.

"Carrots!" he cried. "My long-lost sister, come to my arms!"

"Rupert!" she answered, falling into them. "My prodigal brother, found at last!"

"Are you both of you stark, raving mad?" cried Charles. Then, "Carrots!" he repeated, looking at her eagerly. "You don't mean to say—why, I do declare—no, it can't be—yes, it is! I see it when you smile like that. I do believe you're really and truly the schoolgirl I used to feed with peppermint creams!"

"Ripping they were, too!" she said, still smiling.

"Dear old Cockie," said Rupert, "it's too bad of us. We've had a rare game with you, haven't we? We made it all up on the stairs outside, and everything came off. She simply wouldn't go without seeing you, and when I told her you weren't taking on old friends, she said she'd go as a new one. She stamped her foot till I thought you'd hear her. 'I can smell his peppermints,' she said, 'and, by my halidom, I'll taste them!'"

"Oh, Rupe," interjected his sister, "where *do* you expect to go to?"

"To somewhere in somewhere," he answered, and Charles, with a half-glance at her, immediately declared, "I'm going to have another shot at Kitchener. I surely can get my knee patched up somehow."

"Bravo, old chap!" cried Rupert. "Cold's just about cured, I reckon. By the way," he added, "you owe me a tenner."

"Do I? How do you make that out?"

"Well, the real, genuine E 203 has been here, and I interviewed her on your behalf, and sent her off with the tenner in her bag."

"What was she like?" Charles asked.

"She wasn't young, and she wasn't pretty, and I'm afraid she wasn't any too good, but she made me feel sorry for her and a bit ashamed of myself—that's yourself, you know. She said she'd tramped over from Camden Town, and she was tired, and hungry, and disappointed. There was something sporting about her, though, and she went off blessing the name of Charles Langridge."

"I'm glad of that," said Ethel. "We did play her rather a shabby trick. After all, you know"—she turned to Charles—"you *did* invite her."

"And she'd got tons of sympathy," Rupert put in.

"No," Charles declared. "She invited herself. And I've found something ever so much sweeter than sympathy."

"Have you, Cockie?" asked Rupert. "What's sweeter than sympathy?"

"Why, Carrots, of course," answered Charles, boldly, taking her hand.

PARSON STORIES.

BY OUR READERS.

Illustrated by C. E. Montford.

In a recent number we invited our readers to send us stories illustrating the lighter side of the parson's life. As might have been expected, we have been inundated with anecdotes, and only want of space prevents us from publishing a larger selection.

IT was during the Coronation festivities in the little town of X——. Great rejoicings prevailed, and the proceedings were to commence with the Mayor and Corporation and a vast body of citizens representing all trades and professions marching in procession to the parish church for a special service, whereat all denominations were taking part. The time appointed for the service drew on and the clergy, choir, and congregation were waiting expectantly for the procession to arrive. Some minutes passed, and a Nonconformist minister suggested that to keep things going and to while away the tedium of waiting the choir should sing a hymn, and without further ado struck up, "Hold the Fort, for I am Coming," which hymn, strangely appropriate, was sung with fervour. Unfortunately, however, just as the procession hove into sight, the portly Mayor, in all the dignity of his civic robes, at its head, the choir were singing lustily the second verse, commencing, "See the mighty host advancing, Satan leading on."

THE bishop of the diocese was going to pay a visit to a certain country vicarage, and the vicar was telling his little son that he must be very good, and if the bishop spoke to him he was to call him "my lord."

In due course the bishop arrived, and when, later, he was introduced to the vicar's small boy, he patted him kindly on the head and, smiling benignly, said:—

"Well, my little man, and how old are you?"

To which the little fellow nervously replied:—

"My God, I'm seven!"

Miss D. Wedlake, Burnt House, Edington, Bridgwater, Somerset.

AT a little Methodist chapel one of the poorer brethren was particularly given to venting his appreciation of the service in loud "Amens" and "Alleluias." A certain well-to-do member had found this somewhat disturbing, and, as he thought, hit upon a plan for inducing the enthusiastic one to subdue his outbursts, the arrangement being that if the poor brother would refrain from his disturbing habit for a certain time he was to have a new pair of boots On the following Sabbath all went well for a time, and the service proceeded in unwonted calm, but as the preacher waxed warm and eloquent the poor brother became noticeably ill at ease, and towards the end of the sermon could bear it no longer, and shouted out, "Boots or no boots, Alleluia!"

P. K. Cook, 17, Leadale Road, Stamford Hill, N.

THE vicar was paying his first visit to one of his congregation, who had a small daughter. Whilst the mother was out of the room the vicar talked to the child, who was playing with a Teddy bear, the eyes of which were decidedly crooked. He inquired of the child what she called her Teddy.

"Gladly," replied the child.

"What a strange name," answered the vicar. "What makes you call it that?"

"Well," said the child, "we have it nearly every Sunday at church in 'Gladly my cross I'd bear.' ('Gladly, my cross-eyed bear.')"

Mrs. G. M. Walker, Brooke House Farm, Prestbury, near Macclesfield.

IN a country church in Canada a minister was conducting a service one Sunday night. He listened, apparently not very impressed, to the choir drawling out the first hymn. When the next hymn came around, the first line was, "Little Drops of Water." The minister gave it out, and then added:—

"For goodness' sake put a little spirit into it!"

Cadet K. A. Mackenzie, Royal Naval College, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

A PARSON was making a speech at a temperance meeting. During his discourse he said:—

"If I had my way, all the drink in England should be sunk to the bottom of the sea."

At this stage someone at the back said:—

"Hear, hear!"

"I am glad to see my friend at the back agrees with me," said the parson.

"Yes, sir," said the man; "I am a diver."

Cadet Wilson, Royal Naval College, Dartmouth.

A CURATE was much worried about the increasing insubordination of school-children, due to so many fathers being away at the Front. Hearing exceedingly strong language coming from a group of small boys outside his house, he went out and severely reprimanded them. Nothing was said by the boys till they had put a safe distance between themselves and the curate, when the ringleader, who was not more than ten, struck an attitude in the middle of the road, and exclaimed:—

"Do let us have elegant language, Adolphus!"

THE country parsonage was in a state of flurry and excitement because the bishop, after the Confirmation, was to stay the night. The gardener's lad was brought in as a page-boy and given careful instructions, amongst other things, as to the way he must call the bishop in the morning. He was told to knock at the bedroom door and, on receiving an answer, to say :—

"The boy, my lord.'

Next morning, however, after knocking, he got flurried, and when the bishop answered, he said :—

"The lord, my boy."

NOT very long ago a vicar was very uneasy because his new ritualistic curate would persist in going about the streets in his cassock. Suddenly the practice was discontinued, for the curate had been followed home by a crowd of school-children shouting :—

"Votes for Women !"

THE new diocesan church house had just been opened, and a committee was considering, amongst other things, suitable texts for decorating the various rooms. For the refreshment bar someone suggested, "Here the wild asses quench their thirst."

Miss R. Clinch, Beamond End, Amersham, Bucks.

A LITTLE girl, the daughter of a clergyman, had been learning a Christmas hymn. Imagine her mother's horror when she began :—

"While shepherds *washed* their *frocks* by night !"

Miss I. Williams, Kildale Hall, Grosmont, R.S.O., Yorks.

A CLERGYMAN, beginning his sermon immediately after the conclusion of the anthem, took his text from Acts xx. 1 : "After the uproar was ceased." This, though probably quite unpremeditated, seemed to the choir to be an uncalled-for reflection upon their efforts, and a whispered consultation during the sermon bore fruit in a fine revenge when, at the close of the discourse, they broke forth in another anthem, "It is time to awake from sleep."

C. Smart, 19, Cromwell Street, Swansea.

ONE of my Sabbath-school teachers told me she was explaining the parable of the tares. She asked a little boy who sowed the tares. The boy thought she was looking at the patches on his trousers, and promptly replied :—

"My mother."

Rev. W. J. Fawcett, Greenfield Manse, Armagh.

ALL honour to the man who dares speak plain truth to the great ones of the earth ! A sharp, even rude retort, when addressed to one who has provoked it, reflects credit on the bold speaker. As when a Bishop of Ripon turned upon a professing infidel who asked him if he believed that Jonah was swallowed by a whale.

"When I go to heaven," said the bishop, "I'll ask Jonah."

"But supposing," the other persisted, "he is not there ?"

"Then *you* will have to ask him," was the quick retort.

F. Bayford Harrison, Mount Cottage, Weybridge.

THE genial rector of a neighbouring parish told me an amusing story of an old farmer. It was at the time of a General Election, and prayers had been offered up in church for the guidance of God in the choice of "fit persons" to serve in Parliament. The result of the election was the total defeat at the polls of the Liberal Party, and meeting the farmer shortly afterwards, the rector was greeted by the curt remark :—

"Well, passon, *you've* made a nice mess on't !"

"Indeed, and what have I done ?"

"Why, you've gone and prayed Gladstone out !"

The Rev. Canon Brameld, Bemerton, Woodlands, Combe Martin, North Devon.

IT was customary in the village church for the parson to give out the hymn line by line, and, as he repeated each line, the people sang it. One Sunday, as the organist played the opening chords, the parson discovered that he had not brought his spectacles (without which he could not read) to church. So he said, sadly :—

"My eyes are dim, I cannot see."

The rustic mind not being acute of perception, the congregation took this to be the first line of a new hymn, and accordingly they sang, lustily :—

"My eyes are dim, I cannot see."

The aged parson waited until all was silent. Then :—

"I speak of my infirmity," he announced, petulantly.

"I speak of my infirmity," roared his too-obedient flock.

"I only said my eyes were dim," quavered the old man through the noise, and again the people echoed his remonstrance in song.

By this time the parson had almost collapsed.

"I did not mean to sing a hymn," he murmured, faintly, and the church-goers, nothing daunted, concluded the most extraordinary hymn ever sung in church.

A. Dunlea, 39, King Street, Cork.

AT a certain church in Yorkshire a curate, who was rather small in stature, was due to preach. This church was noted for its high pulpit.

When the curate arrived it was found that he could not see over the top of it sufficiently well for him to preach with any success. Accordingly, a stool was placed in the pulpit for him to stand upon. When the time came for the sermon the preacher got upon the stool and gave out his text :—

"A little while and ye shall see Me, and yet a little while and ye shall not see Me," and immediately he slipped off the stool behind the pulpit.

The curate, who had a keen sense of humour, greatly surprised the congregation, when he had once more come into sight, by saying :—

"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

A VERY earnest Methodist preacher was once preaching at a church where the chapel-keeper was very deaf. The preacher, being anxious to arouse the emotions of his congregation, asked the chapel-keeper to shout "Amen" at suitable points in the sermon.

Of course, being deaf, he could not very well do this. Therefore it was arranged that he should sit at the front near the pulpit, and that the preacher should have a bag of peas, and that, whenever he wished the chapel-keeper to say "Amen," he should drop a pea on the floor.

This scheme worked satisfactorily for about ten minutes, but great was the surprise of the preacher and congregation when a voice suddenly started saying :—

"Amen, Amen, Amen," as quickly as ever he could. The bag had burst !

2nd Lieut. F. Archer, 11th East Surrey Regiment.

A YOUNG curate found the young ladies in the parish too helpful. At last it became so embarrassing that he left. Not long after he met the curate who had succeeded him.

"Well," he asked, "how do you get on with the ladies ?"

"Oh, very well," said the other; "there is safety in numbers, you know."

"Ah !" was the instant reply, "I only found it in Exodus !"

Mrs. Thomas, Cartref, Broadwater Road, Worthing.

THE following story was related to me as an actual occurrence. The vicar of a Manchester church had a young brother who had just been ordained. Knowing that this brother was very nervous, he suggested to him that he should obtain permission to preach his first sermon at his church, so that he might receive confidence from his brother's presence. The permission was duly granted.

In the vestry before the service the younger brother asked if he might remain there till the time for the sermon, so that he might once more run through his notes. The choir, therefore, went into church without him and the service began.

Time passed, and the hymn before the sermon was reached, but the younger brother came not into the church. The hymn ended, still there was no sign of the brother. The vestry door remained closed. So the vicar left his stall and made for the vestry to see what had happened.

On opening the door this is what he saw. His brother was standing in the middle of the vestry with his mouth wide open, and the parish clerk was standing in front of him on tip-toe, trying with both hands to shut it. His teeth had chattered so, through nervousness, that he had put his jaw out !

Clement Winter.

ONE of the funniest stories I ever heard was told me by the curate-in-charge of an East-end mission church. He in his surplice, etc., went to the church on Easter Sunday morning and gave out the well-known hymn, "Christ the Lord is Risen To-day," when a big, strapping woman, half-way down the church, commenced to sing "A Bicycle Made for Two."

He thought, "I can't have my Sunday service spoilt," and beckoned to his verger to come to the reading-desk, and directed him to conduct her quietly from the church. This he flatly refused to do, saying :—

"Not me ! That's Mrs. O'Flannagan, the celebrated woman prize-fighter, and I'm not going to tackle her."

The poor minister had no alternative but to try the job himself, and went down to the pew where she was seated, and, by promising her sundry tickets for groceries and so forth, cajoled her into withdrawing, but at the end of the pew she seized his arm and walked with him, arm in arm, to the door.

Then she suddenly seized him (he is not a big man) and lifted him till his face was opposite hers, gave him a sounding kiss on either cheek, and put him down, saying, loudly :—

"I always tell O'Flannagan if I hadn't had him I'd have had you," and left the poor minister to go back to his desk and conduct his service with feelings that can better be imagined than described.

This story, strange as it may sound, is perfectly true, and the victim is a friend of the writer

George E. Foice, Fairmead, Angel Road, Thames Ditton.

THE new curate was a most amiable young man, and old Bloggs had an idea that his only daughter, whom he expected to make a good match, was becoming infatuated with this curate. Moreover, old Bloggs had a suspicion that the curate had designs upon his daughter, and probably on her money-bags. So he determined to watch and wait, and, should he discover any signs of attachment springing up between the two, to promptly suppress it.

Accordingly, he would always accompany his daughter to and from church when this particular curate officiated. All went well for a time, and, in spite of his daughter's repeated assurances that there was nothing but friendship between them, old Bloggs was not satisfied.

At last the crash came. The young curate ascended the pulpit, gave out his text, Daniel v. 25, and proceeded to read : "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin."

Immediately on hearing the text, old Bloggs, who was slightly deaf, got up, seized his daughter by the hand, marched her out of the church, and did not stop until he reached home. Placing his daughter in a chair, he said :—

"There, Minnie, I knew it ; and you denied it all the time."

By this time Minnie was able to speak, and said : "Why, father, what does all this mean ?"

"Mean !" cried Bloggs. "I would like to know what that impudent young curate means by shouting before the whole congregation, 'Minnie, Minnie, tickle your parson.'"

B. F. Crabbe, 26, St. Alban's Road Brynmill. Swansea.

THE members of a boys' Bible class were asked to bring special offerings the following Sunday for the missionary cause, and a request was made that each boy, on dropping his gift in the missionary-box, should say an appropriate text for the occasion.

The following Sunday the announced collection was taken, and the boys in turn dropped in their offerings with such texts as "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver," "It is more blessed to give," etc.

The last boy in the class dropped in his penny with a sigh, and said, "A fool and his money are soon parted."

Edgar C. Hannant, Market House, Swaffham, Norfolk.

A WORTHY lay preacher in Bedfordshire, who had not been blessed with a too liberal education, yet was fond of using large-sounding words, once referred to something as a "phonemon," meaning, of course, "phenomenon,' and after the service inquired of his host if he had noticed the new word used during the discourse that morning. The host replied in the affirmative, but added that he failed to grasp its meaning.

Therefore, at the evening service, the preacher informed his hearers that he feared he had used a word at the morning service which, perhaps, had not been understood by all, and he would endeavour to explain it.

"If," said he, "as you wend your way home this evening, you pass a cow grazing in the field, that would not be a 'phonemon'; and farther on in the same field you noticed a cluster of thistles, that also could not be described as a 'phonemon'; whilst later on you heard a lark trilling its evening song as it rose in the sky, even that could not be referred to as a 'phonemon.' But," concluded he, with emphasis, "if you saw that same cow sitting on those thistles trilling like a lark, that would indeed be a 'phonemon'!"

H. Hancock, 749, London Road, Derby.

MANY years ago my sister and I paid a visit to Mme. Tussaud's Exhibition. When we were leaving the building she discovered that her purse, containing three sovereigns, was missing. Naturally, this was a shock to us, and we appealed to an attendant, who kindly gave us all the comfort he could, and requested us to call again in a few days.

As my sister was obliged to return to her home, I went alone. On reaching the exhibition an attendant asked me to wait, and invited me into the hall He placed a chair for me near the bottom of the marble staircase, and I sat and watched the sightseers.

Presently a group entered—a parson, apparently, escorting a bevy of fresh young girls. Their guide paid the entrance fees and piloted his fair charges through the turnstile. He had determined, no doubt, that nothing would deceive him, however life-like. They were about to ascend the stairs when the reverend eye alighted upon me, sitting still and calm in the hall. Ah, here was the first test! He approached me cautiously, followed by the ladies, and they all gazed at me with thoughtful faces for a moment, and then he said:—

"She is wax!"

This was too much for me. I blushed and smiled, and the spell was broken. With an embarrassed countenance he raised his hat and begged my pardon, and mounted the stairs hastily, with the tittering girls behind.

I may add that when the official appeared I identified the empty purse of my sister.

Mrs. E. J. Smith, 25, Wellington Street, Swindon.

A WELL-KNOWN evangelist was once conducting a series of meetings in a city in Scotland. At the close of one of his addresses he invited all those who wished to go to heaven to stand up. A large number responded to his appeal, but one old man in the very front remained seated. This rather vexed the speaker, and so he turned to the old man, and said:—

"Don't you want to go to heaven, my friend?"

"Aye," was the reply, "I dee want to gang, but I dinna want to gang wi' the trip."

A CLERGYMAN was taking duty one Sunday for a friend who had a country parish. When he arrived in the vestry he found awaiting him an old worthy, who began to tell him where the various things he needed were, what he ought to do, and, generally, to order him about. This naturally roused the clergyman, and at the first opportunity he broke in and said:—

"Do you mind telling me who you are and what exact office it is that you hold here?"

"Well, sir," declared the old man, "there's some that calls me a beetle, there's others that calls me a sextant, but the parson, he calls me a virgin."

A CURATE, who had recently begun to play golf, came to his vicar to say that he feared he would have to give it up. He said that the game was not good for his morals, and he found himself resorting to strong language.

The vicar suggested that every time he wanted to swear he should put a stone into his pocket.

At the end of the week the curate returned, and showed him his pocket full of stones.

"That is not bad," said the vicar, "for a week's golf."

"Ah, that's not all; there is a cartload of stones coming on behind!"

J. Harper King, Cheviot, Cecil Park, Pinner.

RETRIBUTION.

By "SAPPER"

Author of "The Lieutenant and Others" and "Sergeant Michael Cassidy, R.E."

Illustrated by Warwick Reynolds.

ON the Promenade facing the Casino at Monte Carlo two men were seated smoking. The Riviera season was at its height, and passing to and fro in front of them was the usual gang of well-dressed idlers, who go to form the society of that delectable, if expensive, resort. Now and again a passing acquaintance would nod to them, to be greeted with a smile from one, and a curt grunt from the other, who, with his eyes fixed on the steps down to the Promenade, seemed oblivious of all else.

"Cheer up, Jerry; she won't be long. Give the poor girl time to digest her luncheon." The cheerful one of the twain lit a cigarette; and in the process received the glad eye from a passing siren of striking aspect. "Great Cæsar, old son!" he continued, when she was swallowed up in the crowd, "you're losing the chance of a lifetime. Here, gathered together to bid us welcome, are countless beautiful women and brave men. We are for the moment the cynosure of all eyes—the brave British sailors whom the ladies delight to honour. Never let it be said, old dear, that you failed them in this their hour of need."

"Confound it, Ginger, I know all about that!" The other man sighed and, seeming to come suddenly out of the brown study he was in, he leant forward and fumbled for his cigarette-case. "But it's no go, old man. I'm getting a deuced sight too old and ugly nowadays to chop and change about. There comes a time of life when if a man wants to kiss one particular woman, he might as well kiss his boot for all the pleasure fooling around with another will give him."

Ginger Lawson looked at him critically. "My lad, I fear me that Nemesis has at length descended on you. No longer do the ortolans and caviare of unregenerate bachelorhood tempt you; rather do you yearn for ground rice and chops in the third-floor back. These symptoms——"

"Ginger," interrupted the other, "dry up. You're a dear, good soul, but when you try to be funny, I realize the type of man who writes mottoes for crackers." He started up eagerly, only to sit down again with a disappointed look.

"Not she, not she, my love," continued the other, imperturbably. "And, in the meanwhile, doesn't it strike you that you are committing a bad tactical error in sitting here, with a face like a man that's eaten a bad oyster, in the very seat where she's bound to see you when she does finish her luncheon and come down?"

"I suppose that means you want me to cocktail with you?"

"More impossible ideas have fructified," agreed Ginger, rising.

"No, I'm blowed if——!"

'Come on, old son." Lawson dragged him reluctantly to his feet. "All the world loves a lover, my boy, including the loved one herself; but you look like a deaf-mute at a funeral, who's swallowed his fee. Come and have a cocktail at Ciro's, and then, merry and bright, and caracoling like a young lark, return and snatch her from under the nose of the accursed Teuton."

"Do you think she's going to accept him, Ginger?" muttered the other, anxiously, as they sauntered through the drifting crowd.

"My dear boy, ask me another. But she's coming to the ball dance on board to-night, and if the delicate pink illumination of your special kala jugger, shining softly on your virile face, and toning down the somewhat vivid colour scheme of your sunburned nose, doesn't melt her heart, I don't know what will."

Which all requires a little explanation. Before the war broke out it was the custom each year for that portion of the British Fleet stationed in the Mediterranean, and whose headquarters were at Malta, to make a cruise lasting three weeks or a month to some friendly sea-coast, where the ports were good and the inhabitants merry. Trieste, perhaps, and up the Adriatic; Alexandria and the countries to the East; or, best of all, the Riviera. And at the

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time when my story opens the officers of the British Mediterranean Fleet, which had come to rest in the wonderful natural anchorage of Villefranche, half-way between Monte Carlo and Nice, were doing their best to live up to the reputation which the British naval officer enjoys the world over. Everywhere within motor distance of their vessels they were greeted with joy and acclamation; there were dances and dinners, women and wine—and what more for a space can any hard-worked sailor-man desire? During their brief intervals of leisure they slept and recuperated on board, only to dash off again with unabated zeal to pastures new, or renewed, as the case might be.

Foremost amongst the revellers on this as on other occasions was Jerry Travers, torpedo-lieutenant on the flagship. Being endowed by Nature with an infinite capacity for consuming cocktails, and with a disposition merry and bright as the morning lark, his sudden fall from grace was all the more noticeable. From being a tireless leader of revels, he became a mooner in secret places, a melancholy sigher in the wardroom. Which fact did not escape the eyes of the flagship wardroom officers. And Lawson, the navigating lieutenant, had deputed himself as Jerry's second.

Staying at the Hôtel de Paris was an American, who was afflicted with the dreadful name of Honks; with him were his wife and his daughter Maisie. Maisie Honks has not a prepossessing sound; but she was the girl who was responsible for Jerry Travers's downfall. He had met her at a ball in Nice just after the Fleet arrived, and, from that moment onwards, he had been her devoted slave. Like a goodly number of men who have sailed merrily through life, sipping at many flowers but leaving each without great heart-burnings on either side, when he took it he took it hard. And Maisie had just about reduced him to idiocy. I am no describer of girls, but I was privileged to know and revere the lady from afar, and I can truthfully state that I have rarely, if ever, seen a more absolute dear. She wasn't fluffy, and she wasn't statuesque; she did not have violet eyes which one may liken to mountain pools, or hair of that colour described as spun-gold. She was just—Maisie, one of the most adorable girls that ever happened. And Jerry, as I say, had taken it very badly.

Unfortunately, there was a fly in the ointment—almost of bluebottle size—in the shape of another occupant of the Hôtel de Paris, who had also taken it very badly, and at a much earlier date. The Baron von Dressler—an officer in the German navy, and a member of one of the oldest Prussian families—had been staying at Monte Carlo for nearly a month, on sick leave after a severe dose of fever. And he, likewise, worshipped with ardour and zeal at the Honks shrine. Moreover, being apparently a very decent fellow, and living as he did in the same hotel, he had, as Jerry miserably reflected, a bit of a preponderance in artillery, especially as he'd opened fire more than a fortnight before the British Navy had appeared on the scene. This, then, was the general situation; and the particular feature of the moment, which caused an outlook on life even more gloomy than usual in the heart of the torpedo-lieutenant, was that the Baron von Dressler had been invited to lunch with his adored one, while he had not.

"Something potent, Fritz." Lawson piloted him firmly to the bar and addressed the presiding being respectfully. "Something potent and heady which will make this officer's sad heart merry and bright again. He has been crossed in love."

"Don't be an ass, Ginger," said the other, peevishly.

"My dear fellow, the credit of the Navy is at stake. Admitted that you've had a bad start in the Honks stakes, nevertheless—you never know—our Teuton may take a bad fall. And, incidentally, there they both are, to say nothing of Honks *père et mère*." He was peering through the window. "No, you don't, my boy!" as the other made a dash for the door. "The day is yet young. Lap it up; repeat the dose; and then in the nonchalant style for which our name is famous we will sally forth and have at them."

"Confound it, Ginger! they seem to be on devilish good terms. Look at the blighter, bending towards her as if he owned her." Travers stood in the window rubbing his hands with his handkerchief nervously.

"What d'you expect him to do? Look the other way?" The navigating officer snorted. "You make me tired, Torps. Come along if you're ready; and try and look jaunty and debonair."

"Heavens! old boy; I'm as nervous as a cat." They were passing into the street. "My hands are clammy and my boots are bursting with feet."

"I don't mind about your boots; but for goodness' sake dry your hands. No

self-respecting girl would look at a man with perspiring palms."

Ten minutes later three pairs of people might have been seen strolling up and down the Promenade. And as the arrangement of those pairs was entirely due to the navigating lieutenant, their composition is perhaps worth a paragraph. At one end—as was very right and proper—Jerry and Miss Honks discussed men and matters—at least, I assume so—with a zest that seemed to show his nervousness was only transient. In the middle the stage-manager and Mrs. Honks discussed Society, with a capital " S " —a subject of which the worthy woman knew nothing and talked a lot. At the other end, Mr. Honks poured into the unresponsive ear of an infuriated Prussian nobleman his new scheme for cornering sausages. Which shows what a naval officer can do when he gets down to it.

Now, it is certainly not my intention to give at great length the course of Jerry Travers's love affair during his stay on the Riviera. Sufficient to say, it did not run smooth. But there are one or two points which I must relate, for though they have no actual bearing on the strange happenings which brought together our three principals in circumstances nothing short of miraculous at a future date, yet for the proper understanding of the retribution that came upon the Hun it is well that they should be told.

As far as we are concerned they all occurred that same evening, at the ball given by the British Navy on the flagship. Few sights, I venture to think, are more imposing, and to a certain extent more incongruous, than one of these monsters of the sea in gala mood. For days beforehand, men skilled in electricity erect with painstaking care a veritable fairyland of coloured lights, which shine softly on the deck cleared for dancing, and discreet kala juggers prepared with equal care by officers skilled in love. Everywhere is there peace and luxury; the music of the band steals across the silent water; the death-dealing leviathan is at rest. Almost can one imagine the mighty engines, the great guns, the whole infernal paraphernalia of death, laughing grimly at their master's amusements—those masters whose brains forged them and riveted them and gave them birth; who with the pressure of a finger can launch five tons of death at a speck ten miles away; whose lightest caprice they are bound to obey—and yet who now cover them with flimsy silks and fairy lights, while they dance and make love to laughing, soft-eyed girls. And perhaps there was some such idea in the gunnery-lieutenant's mind as he leant against the breech of a twelve-inch gun, waiting for his particular guest. " Not yet, old man," he muttered to himself; " not yet. To-night we play; to-morrow—who knows? "

Above, the lights shone out unshaded, silhouetting the battle cruiser with lines of fire against the vault of heaven, sprinkled with the golden dust of a myriad stars; while ceaselessly across the violet water steam-pinnaces dashed backwards and forwards, carrying boatloads of guests from the landing-stage, and then going back for more. At the top of the gangway the admiral, immaculate in blue and gold, welcomed them as they arrived; the flag-lieutenant, with the weight of much responsibility on his shoulders, having just completed a last lightning tour of the ship, only to discover a scarcity of hairpins in the ladies' cloak-room, stood behind him. And in the wardroom the engineer-commander—a Scotsman of pessimistic outlook—reviled with impartiality all ball dances, adding a special clause for the one now commencing. But then, off duty, he had no soul above bridge.

Into this setting, therefore, stepped the starters for the Honks stakes; only, for the time being, the positions were reversed. Now the Baron was the stranger in a strange land; Jerry was at home—one of the hosts. Moreover, as has already been discreetly hinted, there was a certain and very particular kala jugger. And into this very particular kala jugger Jerry, in due course, piloted his adored one.

I am now coming to the region of imagination. I was not in that dim-lit nook with them, and therefore I am not in a position to state with any accuracy what occurred. But—and here I must be discreet—there was a midshipman, making up in cheek and inquisitiveness what he lacked in years and stature. Also, as I have said, the Honks stakes were not a private matter—far from it. The prestige of the British Navy was at stake, and betting ran high in the gunroom, or abode of " snotties." Where this young imp of mischief hid, I know not; he swore himself that his overhearing was purely accidental, and endeavoured to excuse his lamentable conduct by saying that he learned a lot!

His account of the engagement betrayed a breezy, if nautical, style, and as there is, so far as I know, no other description of the

operations extant, I give it for what it is worth.

Jerry, he told me in the Union Club, Valetta, at a later date, opened the action with some tentative shots from his higher armament. For ten minutes odd he alternately Honked and Maisied, till, as my ribald informant put it, the deck rang with noises reminiscent of a jibbing motor-car. She countered ably with rhapsodies over the ship, the band, and life in general, utterly refusing to be drawn into personalities.

Then, it appeared, Jerry's self-control completely deserted him, and with a hoarse and throaty noise he opened fire with the full force of his starboard broadside; he rammed down the loud pedal and let drive.

He assured her that she was the only woman he could ever love; he seized her ungloved hand and fervently kissed it; in short, he offered her his hand and heart in the most approved style, the while protesting his absolute unworthiness to aspire to such an honour as her acceptance of the same.

"Net result, old dear," murmured my graceless informant, pressing the bell for another cocktail, "nix—a frost absolute, a frost complete.

"She thought he and the whole ship were bully, and wasn't that little boy who'd brought them out in the launch the cutest ever, but she reckoned sailors cut no ice with poppa. She was just too sorry for words it had ever occurred, but there it was, and there was nothing more to be said."

For the truth of these statements I will not vouch. I do know that on the night in question Jerry was refused by the only woman he'd ever really cared about, because he told me so, and the method of it is of little account. And if there be any who may think I have dealt with this tragedy in an unfeeling way, I must plead in excuse that I have but quoted my informant, and he was one of those in the gunroom who had lost money on the event.

Anyway, let me, as a sop to the serious-minded, pass on to the other little event which I must chronicle before I come to my *finale*. In this world the serious and the gay, the tears and the laughter, come to us out of the great scroll of fate in strange, jumbled succession. The lucky dip at a bazaar holds no more variegated procession of surprises than the mix-up we call life brings to each and all. And so, though my tone in describing Jerry's proposal has perhaps been wantonly flippant, and though the next incident may seem to some to savour of melodrama—yet, is it not life, my masters, is it not life?

I was in the wardroom when it occurred. Jerry, standing by the fireplace, was smoking a cigarette, and, I freely admit, looking like the proverbial gentleman who has lost a sovereign and found sixpence. There were several officers in there at the time, and—the Baron von Dressler. And the Prussian had been drinking.

Not that he was by any means drunk, but he was in that condition when some men become merry, some confidential, some—what shall I say?—not exactly pugnacious, but on the way to it. He belonged to the latter class. All the worst traits which are the hall-mark of the Prussian autocrat, the domineering, sneering, aggressive mannerisms—which, to do him justice, in normal circumstances he successfully concealed, at any rate, when mixing with other nationalities—were showing clearly in his face. He was once again the arrogant, intolerant aristocrat—truly, *in vino veritas*. Moreover, his eyes were wandering with continued frequency to Jerry, who, so far, seemed unconscious of the scrutiny.

After a while I caught Ginger Lawson's eye and he shrugged his shoulders slightly. He told me afterwards that he had been fearing a flare-up for some minutes, but had hoped it would pass over. However, he strolled over to Jerry and started talking.

"Mop that up, Jerry," he said, "and come along and do your duty. Baron, you don't seem to be dancing much to-night. Can't I find you a partner?"

"Thank you, but I probably know more people here than you do." The tone even more than the words was a studied insult. "Lieutenant Travers's duty seems to have been unpleasant up to date, which perhaps accounts for his reluctance to resume it. Are you—er—lucky at cards?" This time the sneer was too obvious to be disregarded.

Jerry looked up, and the eyes of the two men met. "It is possible, Baron von Dressler," he remarked, icily, "that in your navy remarks of that type are regarded as witty. Would it be asking you too much to request that you refrain from using them in a ship where they are merely considered vulgar?"

By this time a dead silence had settled on the wardroom, one of those awkward silences which any scene of this sort produces on those who are in the unfortunate position of onlookers.

Von Dressler was white with passion. "You forget yourself, lieutenant. I would

have you to know that my uncle is a prince of the blood royal."

"That apparently does not prevent his nephew from failing to remember the customs that hold amongst gentlemen."

"Gentlemen!" The Prussian looked round the circle of silent officers with a scornful laugh; the fumes of the spirits he had drunk were mounting to his head with his excitement. "You mean—shopkeepers!"

With a muttered curse several officers started forward; no ball is a teetotal affair, I suppose, and scenes of this sort are dangerous at any time. Travers held up his hand, sharply, incisively.

"Gentlemen, remember this—er—Prussian officer and gentleman is our guest. That being the case, sir"—he turned to the German—"you are quite safe in insulting us as much as you like."

"The question of safety would doubtless prove irresistible to an Englishman." The face of the German was distorted with rage, he seemed to be searching in his mind for insults; then suddenly he tried a new line.

"Bah! I am not a guttersnipe to bandy words with you. You will not have long to wait, you English, and then—when the day does come, my friends; when, at last, we come face to face, then, by God! then——"

"Well, what then, Baron von Dressler?" A stern voice cut like a whiplash across the wardroom; standing in the door was the admiral himself, who had entered unperceived.

For a moment the coarse, furious face of the Prussian paled a little; then with a supreme effort of arrogance he pulled himself together. "Then, sir, we shall see—the world will see—whether you or we will be the victor. The old and effete *versus* the new and efficient. *Der Tag.*" He lifted his hand and let it drop; in the silence one could have heard a pin drop.

"The problem you raise is of interest," answered the admiral, in the same icy tone. "In the meanwhile any discussion is unprofitable; and in the surroundings in which you find yourself at present it is more than unprofitable—it is a gross breach of all good form and service etiquette. As our guest we were pleased to see you; you will pardon my saying that now I can no longer regard you as a guest. Will you kindly give orders, Lieutenant Travers, for a steam-pinnace? Baron von Dressler will go ashore."

Such was the other incident that concerned my principals, and which, of necessity, I have had to record. Such an incident is probably well-nigh unique; but when there's a girl at the bottom of things and wine at the top, something is likely to happen. The only unfortunate thing about it all, as far as Jerry was concerned, was an untimely indisposition on the part of Honks *mère*. As a coincidence nothing could have been more disastrous.

The pinnace was at the foot of the gangway, and the Baron—his eyes glinting with fury—was just preparing to take an elaborate and sarcastic farewell of the silent torpedo-lieutenant, who was regarding him with an air of cold contempt, when Mr. Honks appeared on the scene.

"Say, Baron, are you going away?"

"I am, Mr. Honks. My presence seems distasteful to the officers."

The American seemed hardly to hear the last part of the remark. "I guess we'll quit, too. My wife's been taken bad. Can we come in your boat, Baron?"

"I shall be more than delighted." His eyes came round with ill-concealed triumph to Travers's impassive face as the American bustled away. "I venture to think that the Honks stakes are still open."

"By Heaven! You blackguard!" muttered Jerry, his passion overcoming him for a moment. "I believe I'd give my commission to smash your ugly face in with a marline-spike and chuck you into the sea."

"I won't forget what you say," answered the German, vindictively. "One day I'll make you eat those words; and then when I've sunk your rat-eaten ship, it will be me that does the marline-spike bit—you swine."

It was as well for Jerry and for the Baron, too, that at this psychological moment the Honks *ménage* arrived; otherwise that German would probably have gone into the sea.

"Good night, lady," murmured Jerry, when he had solicitously inquired after her mother's health. "Is there no hope?" He was desperately anxious to seize the second or two left; he knew she would not hear the true account of what had happened from the Baron.

"I guess not," she answered, softly. "But come and call." With a smile she was gone, and from the boat there came the Baron's voice mocking through the still air, "Good night, Lieutenant Travers. Thank you so much."

And, drowned by the band that started at that moment, the wonderful and fearful curse that left the torpedo-lieutenant's lips drifted into the night unheard.

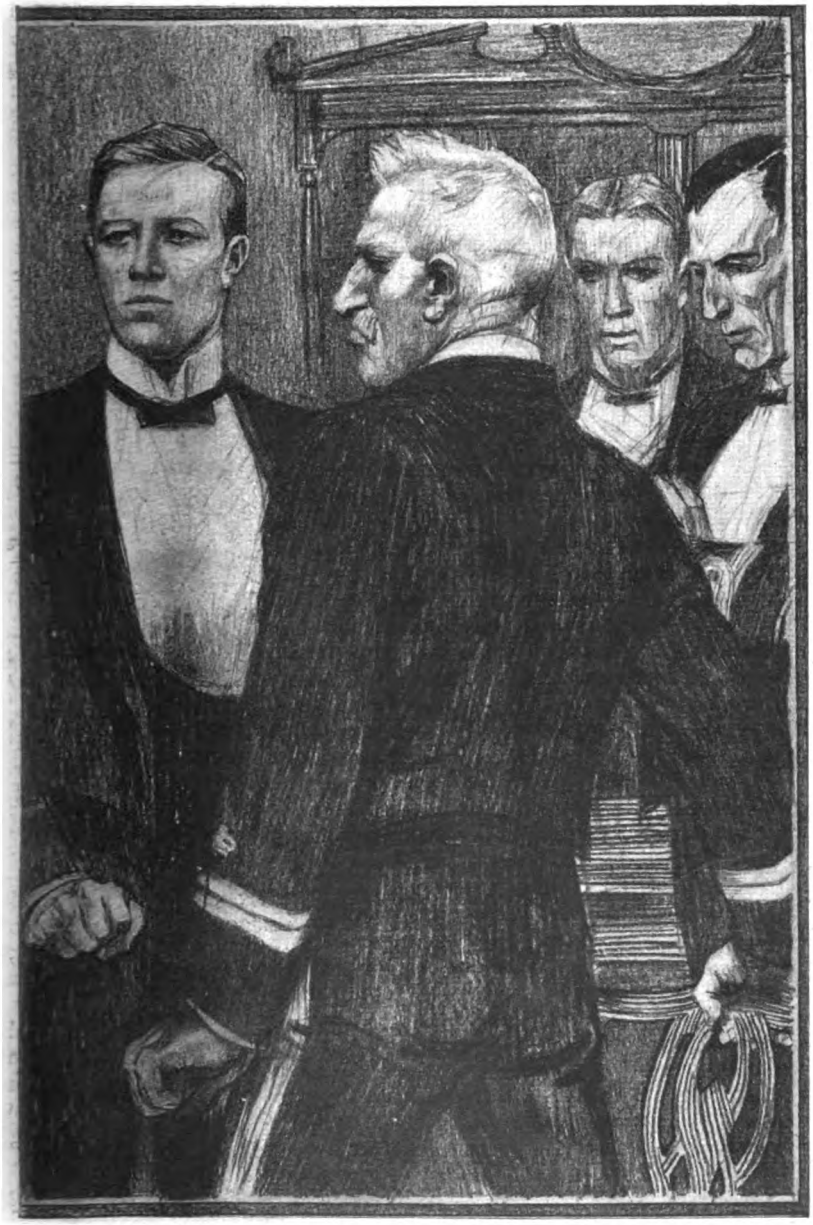
Let us go on a couple of years. The

moment thought of by the gunnery-lieutenant, the day acclaimed by the Prussian officer had come. England was at war; *der Tag* was an ever-present reality. No longer did silks and shaded lights form part of the equipment of the Navy, but grim and sombre, destitute of anything not absolutely necessary, the great grey monsters watched tirelessly through the flying scud of the North Sea for "the fleet that stayed at home." Only their submarines were out, and these, day by day, diminished in numbers, until the men who sent them out looked at one another fearfully—so many went out, so few came back. There are several ways of dealing with submarines, and they realized the British Navy knew them.

Tearing through the water one day, away a bit to the south-west of Bantry Bay, with the haze of the Emerald Isle lying like a smudge on the horizon, was a lean, villainous-looking torpedo-boat-destroyer. She was plunging her nose into the slight swell, now and again drenching the oilskinned figure standing motionless on the bridge. Behind her a great cloud of black smoke drifted slowly across the grey water, and the whole vessel was quivering with the force of her engines. She was doing her maximum and a bit more, but still the steady, watchful eyes of the officer on the bridge seemed impatient, and occasionally a muttered exclamation escaped his lips.

"WITH A SUPREME EFFORT OF ARROGANCE HE PULLED HIMSELF TOGETHER. WILL BE THE VICTOR. THE OLD AND EFFETE

It was our friend Jerry, who at the end of his time on the flagship had been given one of the newest T.B.D.'s, and now with every ounce he could get out of her he was racing towards the spot from which had come the last S.O.S. message, nearly an hour ago. There was something grimly menacing about



'THEN, SIR, WE SHALL SEE—THE WORLD WILL SEE—WHETHER YOU OR WE VERSUS THE NEW AND EFFICIENT. DER TAG.'"

those agonized calls sent out to the world for perhaps twenty minutes, and then—silence, nothing more. German submarines, he reflected, as for the tenth time he peered at his wrist-watch; German submarines engaged once again in the only form of war they could compete in or dared undertake. And not for the first time his thoughts went back to the vainglorious boastings of his friend the Baron.

"Hang him," he muttered under his breath, "I haven't forgotten his pleasant manners."

There were other things, too, he hadn't forgotten; for, when he'd gone to call on the lady as requested, she had been "out," and it was that sort of "out" that means "in." A letter had been answered courteously but distinctly coldly, and, impotent with rage, he had been forced to the conclusion that she was offended with him. And with the Prussian able to say what he liked, it was not difficult to find the reason.

Then the Fleet had left and Jerry resigned himself to the inevitable, a proceeding which was not made easier by the many rumours he heard to the effect that the Baron himself was engaged to her. Distinctly he wanted once again to meet that gentleman.

"We ought to see her, if she hasn't sunk, sir, by now." The sub-lieutenant on the bridge spoke in his ear.

Travers nodded and swept the horizon with his glass.

"Something on the starboard bow." The voice of the look-out man came to his ears.

"It's a boat, and I belive it's empty!" cried the sub.

A curt order, and the T.B.D. swung round and tore down on the little speck bobbing in the water. And they were still a mile away

when a look of dawning horror strangely mixed with joy spread over Jerry's face. His glass was fixed on the boat, and who in God's name was the woman—impossible, of course,—but surely. . . . If it wasn't it was her twin sister; his hand holding the glass trembled with eagerness, and then at last he knew. The woman standing up in the stern of the boat *was* Maisie, and as he got nearer he saw there was a look on her face as of a soul who has looked upon death.

"Great God!" The sub's voice roused him. "What have they been doing?" No need to ask whom he meant by "they." "The boat is a 'shambles.'"

The destroyer slowed down, and from the crew who looked into that little open boat came dreadful curses. It ran with blood; and at the bottom women and children moaned feebly. And over this black scene the eyes of the man and the woman met.

"Carefully, carefully, lads," Travers sang out. This was no time for questions, only the poor torn fragments counted. Afterwards, perhaps. Tenderly as women the sailors lifted out the bodies, and one of them—a little girl in his arms, with a dreadful wound in her head—jabbered like a maniac with the fury of his rage. And so after many days they again came face to face.

"Are you wounded?" he whispered.

"No." Her voice was hard and strained; she was near the breaking point. "They sank us without warning—the *Lucania*—and then shelled us in the open boats."

"Dear heavens!" Jerry's voice was shaking. "Ah! but you're not hurt, my lady; they didn't hit you?"

"My mother was drowned, and my father too. It was the U 99."

"Ah!" The man's voice was almost a sigh.

"Submarine on the port bow, sir." A howl came from the look-out, followed by the reports of two twelve-pounders. And then a roaring cheer seemed to shake the very ship. Like lightning Jerry was upon the bridge, and even he could scarcely contain himself. There, lying helpless in the water with a huge hole in her conning-tower, wallowed the U 99. Two direct hits from the destroyer's guns in a vital spot, and the submarine was a submarine no longer. Just one of those strokes of poetic justice which happen so rarely in war.

Like rats from a sinking ship the Germans were pouring up and going into the water, and with snarling faces the Englishmen waited for them, waited for them with the dying proofs of their vileness still lying on the deck. One by one they came on board, and suddenly the submarine foundered. And almost as she went down her commander came on board the destroyer, and Baron von Dressler, for it was he, found himself face to face with his captor. Maisie, lying half-fainting against a coil of rope, he did not see.

The Englishmen were muttering angrily, and, huddled together, the German sailors looked fearfully round. And suddenly the man who had carried up the little girl gave a hoarse cry, and with all his force he smote the nearest German in the mouth. The German fell like a stone.

"Stand fast." Jerry's voice dominated the scene. "It is not their fault, they were only obeying his orders." And once again his eyes rested on their officer.

"So we meet again," he remarked, "and the rat-eaten ship is not sunk. Is this your work?" He pointed to the mangled bodies

"It is not," muttered the Prussian.

"You lie, you swine, you lie! Unfortunately for you you didn't quite carry out your infamous butchery completely enough. There is one person on board who knows the U 99 sank the *Lucania* without warning and was in the boat you shelled."

"I don't believe you, I——"

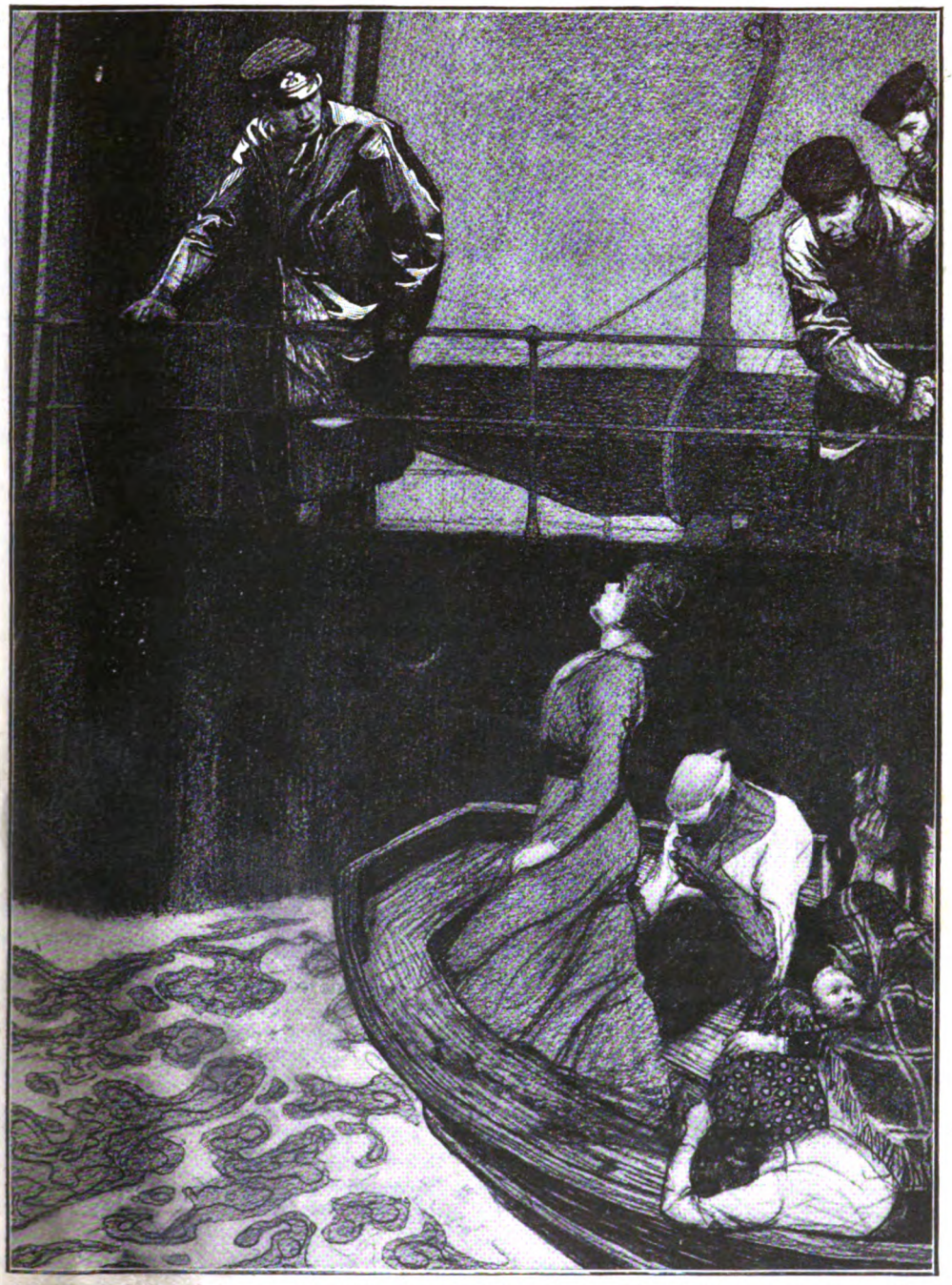
"Then perhaps you'll believe her. I rather think you know her—very well. Look behind you, you cur."

The Prussian turned, and then with a cry staggered back, white to the lips. "You, great heavens, you—Maisie——"

And so once again the three principals of my little drama were face to face. But no longer did sensuous music and the warm, violet waters of the Riviera form their setting; this time, with their band the ceaseless moaning of the dying men and children, and with the grey scud of the Atlantic flying past them, the Englishman and the German faced one another, and the American girl stood by. And watching them were the muttering sailors.

At last she spoke. "This ring, I believe, is yours." She took a great half-hoop of diamonds from her engagement finger and, with a swift movement, flung it into the sea. Then she moved towards him.

"You drowned my mother, and for that I strike you once." She hit him in the face with an iron-shod pin. "You drowned my father, and for that I strike you again." Once again she struck him in the face. "I will leave a fighting man and a gentleman to deal with you for those poor mites." With a choking sob she turned away, and once again sank down on the coil of rope.



"AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BOAT WOMEN AND CHILDREN MOANED FEEBLY. AND OVER THIS BLACK SCENE THE EYES OF THE MAN AND THE WOMAN MET."

The Prussian, sobbing with pain and baffled rage, with the blood streaming from his face, was not a pretty sight; but in Travers's face there was no pity, only icy contempt.

"'The old and effete *versus* the new and efficient!' I seem to recall those words from our last meeting. May I congratulate you on your efficiency? Bah! you swine"—his face flamed with sudden passion—"if you aren't skulking in Kiel, you're butchering

women. By heavens! I can conceive of nothing more utterly perfect than flogging you to death."

The Prussian shrank back, his face livid with fear.

"They were my orders," he muttered. "For God's sake——"

"Oh, don't be frightened, Baron von Dressler." The Englishman's voice was once again under control. "The old and effete don't do that. You were safe as our guest two years ago; you are safe as our prisoner now. Your precious carcass will be returned safe and sound to your Royal uncle at the end of the war, and my only hope is that your face will still bear those honourable scars. Moreover, if what you say is true, if the orders of your Government include shelling an open boat crammed with defenceless women and children—and neutrals at that—I can only say that their infamy is so incredible as to force one to the conclusion that they are not responsible for their actions. But—make no mistake—they will get their retribution."

For a moment he fell silent, looking at the cowering, blood-stained face opposite him, and then a pitiful wail behind him made him turn round.

"Mummie, I'se hurted." On her knees beside the little girl was Maisie, soothing her as best she could, easing the throbbing head, whispering that mummie couldn't come for a while. "I'se hurted, mummie—I'se hurted."

Travers turned back again, and the eyes of the two men met.

"My God! Is it possible that a sailor could do such a thing?"

His voice was barely above a whisper, yet the Prussian heard and winced. In the depths of even the foulest bully there is generally some little redeeming spark.

"I'se hurted; I want my mummie."

The Prussian's lips moved, but no sound came, while in his eyes was the look of a man haunted. Travers watched him silently, and at length he spoke again.

"YOU DROWNED MY FATHER, AND FOR THAT I STRIKE YOU AGAIN."

"As I said, your rulers will get their deserts in time, but I think, Baron von Dressler, your Nemesis has come on you already. That poor little kid is asking you for her mother. Don't forget it in the years to come, Baron, don't forget it."

My story is finished. Later on, when some of the nightmare through which she had passed had been effaced from her mind by the great healer, Time, Maisie and the man who had come to her out of the grey waters discussed many things. And the story which the Prussian had told her after the dance on the flagship was finally discredited.

Can anyone recommend me a good cheap book on "Things a Best Man Should Know"?

MR. J. E. VEDRENNE.
Photo. by Claude Harris.

The Reflections of a Theatrical Manager.

By

J. E. VEDRENNE.

According to a famous dramatic critic, Mr. J. E. Vedrenne—the producer of two of the most successful comedies of recent years, "Milestones" and "The Man Who Stayed At Home"—has discovered and given a "start" to more now-famous actors and actresses than any other manager. In the following article, specially written for "The Strand Magazine," Mr. Vedrenne tells of some of his early experiences and relates many stories of famous actors, actresses, authors, and celebrities he has met.

IN his own small way, and viewing those with whom he comes into contact from the standpoint of the general public, who would seem to be invariably keenly interested in leading lights of the theatrical world, I imagine that few people in their business careers meet more interesting "personalities" than the pioneer and promoter of the theatre.

And as one who has for some years played an active part in theatrical projects at home and abroad, I have been brought into personal touch with the majority of theatrical celebrities. But when first I met them, many were unknown to the average theatre-goer.

One of my earliest ventures in matters theatrical was at the Comedy Theatre, where I "managed" for, among others, Forbes-Robertson, Nat Goodwin, and Maxine Elliott, and where, by the way, I also "enjoyed" my first experience as a manager of a London theatre in what probably now sounds exceedingly unpatriotic—a German season!

But, happily, in those days "the sword was not unsheathed," and, full of enthusiasm and ambitious plans, I undertook this enterprise with the greatest confidence.

As though it had happened but yesterday, I well remember my first night of the German season at the Comedy in 1899. I was standing on the steps of the theatre wondering whether this experiment would start me on the road to success when suddenly I noticed a black cat rubbing himself against my leg. Now, even those who regard superstition with scorn must have heard that the advent of a black cat to a theatre is popularly supposed to spell good luck.

In my own case it didn't.

We were announced to produce Goethe's "Faust." With the idea of "getting a move" on this masterpiece several directors' meetings were held, and, finally, in a burst of stupendous generosity, and as some sixteen special scenes were required (including one in Heaven), an extra credit was voted me of forty pounds!

The play rang up on the evening announced at seven-thirty, and at 12.45 a.m. the garden scene had not been reached. At least two hours before that time the audience had commenced to dribble out,

with the not surprising result that by two o'clock in the morning, when the curtain at last rang down, only four hardened critics were left in the house, two of whom, I was afterwards told, were slumbering peacefully.

I migrated to the Court Theatre shortly afterwards, where I began an association with Granville Barker which marked the first of not a few successful theatrical enterprises.

Wonderful days, those Court days! They began on October 18th, 1904, and lasted until June 29th, 1907. During that time thirty-two plays by seventeen authors were produced, and nine hundred and forty-six performances were given; but, since one triple bill and four double bills were included, the total number of performances of separate plays amounted to nine hundred and eighty-eight, distributed amongst many world-famous authors, including Bernard Shaw, Housman, Barker, Galsworthy, Masefield, Hankin, Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Hewlett, Elizabeth Robins, *and* Euripides.

At the Court Theatre we, Granville Barker and I, produced John Galsworthy's first play, "The Silver Box." When that famous playwright brought me the play in question he remarked to me that it was the first he had ever written. I said, "Is it really your first play?" For a few seconds Galsworthy hesitated, and then replied, "Well, I wrote another before this—but I have burnt it."

That significant reply instinctively caused me to believe that it had fallen to my lucky lot to come across an "extraordinary man," and ever since I have been more than grateful to that intuition, for "The Silver Box" has been followed by "Strife," "Justice," "The Pigeon," "The Eldest Son," "The Fugitive," "The Mob," and other plays from the same master-hand.

MR. GRANVILLE BARKER.
Photo. by E. H. Mills.

It was at the Court that we started the idea of giving *matinées* on Tuesdays and Fridays with a different play from the one running in the evening bill.

I remember our first failure was a play by Robert Vernon Harcourt entitled "A Question of Age." This particular production showed early promise of not being likely to prove a success, and after the second *matinée* we decided to take it off and to put up instead "Major Barbara," by Bernard Shaw, which had been most successful a few weeks before.

Hearing of this intention on my part, Shaw at once came to see me in a great state, and asked me why I had decided to make the change. I replied that it was a matter of finance, whereupon Shaw inquired, "What would be the difference in the takings of my play, 'Major Barbara,' and the takings of Harcourt's play?" I named a substantial sum, whereon Shaw replied, "Very well, let me pay the difference, and let the Harcourt play have its chance. It is one of his first efforts as an author, and I think he ought to be encouraged."

MISS ELLEN TERRY.
Photo. by Foulsham & Banfield.

Here is another Shaw story. During the rehearsals of "Captain Brassbound's Conversion," Ellen Terry, who played the part of Lady Cecily Waynflete, had the misfortune to catch a mild attack of bronchitis, and this naturally interfered with her studying so long a part. Anxious not to disappoint the public with a postponement, I asked Shaw some two or three days before the date announced for the production whether Ellen Terry knew her lines. His reply was typically Shavian: "Well, she doesn't speak exactly the words that I wrote," he said, "but she speaks what I ought to have written."

Writing of Ellen Terry reminds me of a wonderful compliment paid to that great artiste during her engagement at the Court Theatre. One day during the run of "Captain Brassbound's Conversion," when, as was invariably the case, a long queue had gathered at the doors, shortly after the opening of the theatre the business manager was summoned to make inquiries about an accident said to have occurred to an old lady who, in mounting the stairs to the tier allotted to the "gods," had slipped down. She had apparently sprained her ankle, and a doctor was sent for. To the manager's expressions of sympathy she said, "It is

"ELLEN TERRY RAN DOWNSTAIRS INTO THE ROOM WHERE THE OLD LADY HAD BEEN TAKEN, SPOKE A FEW WORDS TO HER, KISSED HER, AND GAVE HER A SIGNED PHOTOGRAPH OF HERSELF."

not my foot I am worrying about. That was my own fault; but I did so want to see Miss Terry. I had made the journey up from the country specially, and now I suppose I shall never see her." This conversation was repeated to Miss Terry, who had just come into the theatre, and in her delightfully impulsive way she immediately exclaimed, "Oh, the darling! She *shall* see me." And she ran downstairs into the room where the old lady had been taken, spoke a few words to her, kissed her, and gave her a signed photograph of herself. When the doctor arrived it was found that the old lady had broken her ankle rather badly, but as she was being lifted into the four-wheeler to be taken to the hospital she appeared not to mind the accident in the least. She had seen Miss Terry and was perfectly happy.

MR. DENNIS EADIE.
Photo. by Foulsham & Banfield.

It was during my association with Granville Barker that I first had the good fortune to come across Dennis Eadie, who played several good parts with us, but none that he literally loathed so much as the *rôle* of Menelaus in "The Trojan Women."

The first occasion on which he played this part he came to my room wearing what he described as a fireman's helmet, and asked if he could have some holes punched in the side of this fearsome headgear as he could not hear what he was saying—and much less anybody else.

Menelaus and Christopher Brent! Truly, time works many a transformation—and not the least among members of the theatre.

About the time that Eadie and I became associated at the Royalty Theatre I saw Gladys Cooper for almost the first time in a sketch at the Coliseum, when she was appearing with Seymour Hicks, and there and then it struck me that a girl with such beauty and charm and obvious intelligence would make a success as a comedy actress.

I therefore arranged to discuss future plans with her at once, with the result that, a few weeks later, she played the *ingénue* part in "Half a Crown," which, by the way, was a complete failure, and not merely half a catastrophe.

Undeterred, however, we were determined that we would get Miss Cooper back with us, and so it happened, for six months later she came again to the Royalty Theatre, was seen by all the world and his wife, and made a conquest which will long be remembered. One of her greatest successes with us occurred in "The Pursuit of Pamela," by C. B. Fernald, which followed her performance of Dora in "Diplomacy," for which production we "lent" her to Gerald du Maurier and Frank Curzon.

Miss Cooper, of course, as most theatre-

"THE FIRST TIME DENNIS EADIE PLAYED MENELAUS IN THE 'TROJAN WOMEN,' HE CAME TO MY ROOM WEARING WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS A FIREMAN'S HELMET."

goers will assuredly remember, also made a great hit in "Milestones." A truly colossal success this play. Good or bad weather, principals or understudies, it seemed not to matter, for people filled the theatre just the same. I well remember that on one occasion, when a leading artiste had been suddenly taken ill at the last moment and replaced by an understudy who we feared would let the play down badly, a visitor went up to the box-office during the interval and politely inquired who the new man was, as, he said, "I like him much better than the original."

In passing, I may say that the "making" of "Milestones," surely one of the greatest theatrical successes seen in London for many years past, came about in a most unusual way, for Arnold Bennett and Edward Knoblauch, the joint authors, had actually never met until the idea of a play covering three generations occurred to both, when a mutual friend, Frank Vernon, introduced one to the other in order that they should make one another's acquaintance and discover how well suited they were to collaborate.

Apropos of the production of "Pamela," in the pursuit of which that charming lady, Gladys Cooper, scored so great a success, we were called upon to engage several Japanese artistes whose appearance was essential in the Japanese scene of the play. All these were naturally dealt with through an interpreter—few of us talk the Japanese lingo fluently—with the sole exception of one, a Mr. Yamada, who, I remember, was particularly persistent in his argument for a higher salary than that which I felt justified in offering him.

MISS GLADYS COOPER.
Photo. by Foulsham & Banfield.

Finally, however, after discussing this matter from both an artistic and a financial point of view, a satisfactory arrangement was agreed upon, under which he and his wife, a very charming little Japanese actress, contracted to appear. As he bowed his way out of my office, I remarked, "Well, Mr. Yamada, you are a very good Japanese business man," at which the little man replied with a beaming smile, the while showing a flashing set of excellent teeth, "Thank you very much—but, if you please—a, my-a father was a Scotchman."

Another Japanese actor in "Pamela" was cast to play a Chinaman. He came to inform me that he could not undertake the part as he could not represent anything but one of his own nationality. So I explained that this would indeed be a catastrophe. Moreover, I said, "My partner, Dennis Eadie, plays people of any nationality. If I didn't consider you a great artiste, I would not ask you to play a Chinaman." This argument

MR. LEWIS WALLER.
Photo. by Foulsham & Banfield.

appeared to him thoroughly convincing, and I appreciated once more the truth of the saying that policy always demands *politesse*.

SIR A. CONAN DOYLE.
Photo. by Poulsham & Banfield.

Here is an anecdote connected with that fine actor and best of good fellows, Lewis Waller. Not very long ago Waller and I were staying with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at his delightful house on the Crowborough heights. One evening after dinner Sir Arthur was showing us a bust of Sherlock Holmes, and remarked that he had, a few weeks before, received a communication from Germany asking for the kind help of the celebrated English detective in a murder case which presumably must have entirely baffled the well-organized minds of the Hun sleuth-hounds of the law. The Germans then evidently believed, and perhaps still believe, that Sherlock Holmes was a real person, in which case it almost goes without saying that by this time they have probably claimed this fascinating celebrity as a fellow-countryman.

After the termination of our visit to Sir Arthur, Waller and I motored back to town, Waller driving, and on our way homewards passed through the village of Groombridge. Much struck by its rustic beauty and charm, we pulled up, wandered around its one little street, and eventually went in to look at its old church, where there is a window dedicated to the memory of Sir Richard Waller, Knight of Groombridge, by whom Charles, Duke of Orleans, was rescued at the Battle of Agincourt, 1415. A particularly interesting coincidence this to both Waller and myself, as we were playing "Henry V." at the Lyric Theatre at the time. What a little world it is, to be sure!

MISS GENEVIEVE WARD.
Photo. by Illustrations Bureau.

Here let me mention that wonderful old lady, Miss Genevieve Ward one of my oldest friends, who recently celebrated her eightieth birthday, and yet is still perhaps the greatest tragedy-actress in England at the present day. I saw her not long ago at the St. James's Theatre, where she played the part of the Duchess of Cheviot under Sir George Alexander's management—and, need I add, played it with conspicuous brilliancy.

Here is an anecdote of another theatrical celebrity, Sir Charles Wyndham, which contains, by the way, a word of advice which youthful theatrical managers would do well to bear in mind. Some years ago I very nearly took the New Theatre from Sir Charles. In those days I was managing the Court Theatre in partnership with Granville Barker, and we had just produced four or five of the new Shaw plays, each of which had scored a "palpable hit." But it was our custom then to run a play for a definite number of weeks and then change the bill whether the public support was good or ill. This could not be called a repertory system, but might more appropriately have been termed a "short-run system."

SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM.
Photo. by Poulsham & Banfield.

With this policy, however, Wyndham did not agree at all, for I well remember his telling me that, although he admired my pluck for doing this, it was nevertheless his firm conviction that we should have made much more money by letting such plays as "John Bull's Other Island," "You Never Can Tell," "Man and Superman," "Major Barbara," and "The Doctor's Dilemma" run themselves out; and he pointed out to me that the taking off of any of these plays must have had a distinct effect on the public. He was right. At the Royalty Theatre "Milestones" ran for seven hundred performances, and "The Man Who Stayed at Home" for nearly six hundred performances. "The Pursuit of Pamela" and "My Lady's Dress" also ran for a considerable time. Since then we have profited by experience, and do not now interrupt the runs of plays.

Judging from the tremendous popularity of "Man and Superman" in America with Robert Loraine, I have often wondered what

number of performances it would have reached at the Court Theatre if we had not repeatedly interrupted its run. But, there, it is idle to regret. *Experientia docet.*

Writing of Loraine reminds me of the days when he played the part of Jan Redlander in "The Man From the Sea," by W. J. Locke, at the Queen's Theatre. Those were the early days of his flying ambition, and I now frankly confess that I frequently felt very apprehensive as to what might happen to him before our play was produced. Two days before the production he flew across the Irish Channel and fell into the sea a few miles from the Irish coast. It will be remembered that he eventually got safely ashore with his machine.

Fit as a fiddle and like Niobe, all smiles, the next day he turned up at the theatre to the dress rehearsal, to be warmly congratulated on his wonderful achievement and marvellous escape. Taking him aside I said, "Yes, Loraine, it's all very well, but suppose you had sunk in the sea and got drowned?"

MR. ROBERT LORAINE.
Photo. by Illustrations Bureau.

His answer was, "Well, it would not have hurt anybody except myself." To which I replied, "What about my production of 'The Man From the Sea'?"

He had never thought of this! He had merely felt convinced that he would get through all right. And he did. Not only through the run of the play, but through many other more stirring adventures he has recently gone when doing marvellously good work for us "Somewhere in Flanders" and "other places." He has recently won the Military Cross. A good actor, a wonderful man, and one of our bravest officers. Small wonder the theatrical profession is proud of him!

An actor I met early in his career when he was comparatively unknown, and who is now serving in the Flying Corps, is Basil Hallam, whom I engaged to play one of his first good parts in London at our Royalty Theatre. The piece was called "The Honeymoon," by Arnold Bennett, and Miss Marie Tempest played the leading part. Hallam's part in the piece was that of the younger brother of the hero, a light-hearted, sympathetic, and amusing "knut" and worthy predecessor of Gilbert the Filbert.

To revert from actors to authors, I should like to say that one of our most promising "discoveries" among authors is Macdonald Hastings, whose first play, "The New Sin," was produced some four years ago. I read the play one night, sent for Hastings the next morning, and in the space of a very few moments a contract was fixed up between us. This play consisted of seven male characters only, all of whom, happily, seemed to please the critics, for it was unanimously agreed that "The New Sin" was perhaps the best-cast play seen in London.

MR. BASIL HALLAM.
Photo. by Foulsham & Banfield.

Another "discovered" author of ours is H. M. Harwood, who wrote "Interlopers," and also "Please Help Emily," which provided Charles Hawtrey and Gladys Cooper with such effective parts.

And so the years roll on. When I look back on the long tale of now successful actors and actresses who have appeared under my wing in some of their first engagements, I am sometimes almost rash enough to congratulate myself for a flitting moment on the fact that the fickle goddess may have been kind enough to have imbued me with an intuitive sense of discovery which has helped me to success. But in the promotion of theatrical enterprises, in the engaging of artistes, in the furtherance of one's aims, objects, and ambitions—in fine, in the framing-out and passing in parade of those requirements which "win out" prosperity in a business career in the theatre, there is no real road to success.

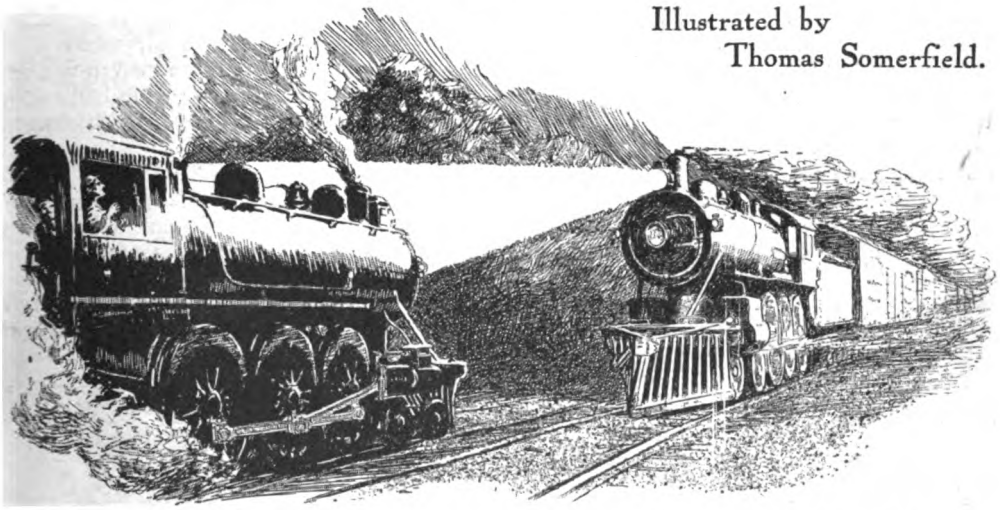
How can it be achieved, then? One must trust one's judgment, work hard, never doubt the wisdom of one's policy when once that policy has been thought out in every detail, and, last but not least, one must always keep a never-failing and ever-watchful look-out for new material, new authors, new actors, new ideas, and even then one may fail!

Success? The key to success always rests "on the knees of the gods."

THE WHITE MOGUL.

By PERCY ADAMS HUTCHISON.

Illustrated by Thomas Somerfield.



"DELANEY got shut easy av his sins."

In the van of the Fast Freight, which had backed off to clear the track for the Limited, Tim M'Cool, the guard, had been holding forth on the tragedy at the roundhouse where "Red" Delaney, a driver of notorious living, had been shot dead by the man he had wronged.

"I'm talking through me hat, am I?" The guard had challenged Tim's assertion. "Did I iver tell ye av the White Mogul? I did not? Thin maybe I will, though it was long before I come with this comp'ny, when for the Continental Midland I wurrked. An' fwhat was the name av the man was at the bottom av things—Strayker, Matt Strayker. 'Tis not like I'd forget, meself being his fireman; for in them days I was minded to become engine-driver. Afterwards I transferred me ambitions to the van, the sup'rintindint persuading me.

"Our run was the Wells-Fargo. An', be token, the same was no cinch. The train was all sealed express cars, each as big as a house, with a coach on the end for the crew; whoilst the division being mostly level, we had to make up the time lost in the hills. An' we did it—aye, we did it—for better driver than Strayker never sat on an engine.

"But if Matt was the best driver that ever pulled throttle he was the worst man. For why? Not because av the drink, for he did not drink; an' not because he was cruel an' mean, as he was both. But because—well, 'a bit av flirtationing now an' again,' sez I to him one day, 'be way av pastime, ye understand, does no great harm. But I misdoubt if it is any pastime with yeself,' I sez.

"'Tis not,' he answers, laughing a wicked laugh. 'Tis fwhat larned men call an obsession.'

"'I'm no larned man,' I sez. 'But the session ye are like to have the Judgmint Day is not one I'd be wishful after meself.'

"With that he slanged me east an' west, an' told me to stick to my job, for he cud attend to his. So I kept me thoughts to meself.

"The Wells-Fargo was a night run, we leaving the roundhouse to pick up the train at about seven. An' as we wud be making ready to leave the stall, the engine of the Eastern Mail wud be coming in. The driver av this was a man be the name av Karlstrom, an' 'twas out av Noroway, or some other av them furrin parts, he was come. He had been in the lumber-camps, North, before he took to the rail, an' he was straight and grand, like the trees he had lived among, an'

his shoulders broad from swinging the axe. But, be token, he was not a young man, an' being slow av speech, not quick with the come-back, he kept mostly to himself. This led some to mistake him, Strayker being one.

"'Yellow, is it?' sez I. 'Then 'tis colour-blind I am, an' needing the doctor.' For if there was iver a man I wud not have been yearning to arrouse, 'twas Karlstrom.

"Like iv'ry man that is a man—an' many that ain't—Karlstrom had a sweetheart, an' he was saving to build a bit av a house against the wedding day. Her head did not come to his shoulders, but her cheeks was pink an' white, like the childers', an' her smile was as the leaves in spring. She was younger than Karlstrom by a deal, being little more than out av school; an' because she was so young, an' their lone child as well, her father an' mother was not wishful to lose her. So the wedding was put off. But always wud she come to meet Karlstrom when he got in from the run — the roundhouse was on the edge av the yard—an' whoilst she wud be waiting she was never wanting for a wurrd to pass the time av day. But 'twas only because she had friendly ways with all, for there was not a thought av badness in her.

"When Strayker first begun to take notice av Netta—the name was short for Annette — I cannot say. But sorry the day for her. Yet he did not go about the business in any hasty or bungling fashion, for he was no apprentice, but master, aye, an' past-master, av his craft. Belike 'twas a chance meeting here, another chance meeting there—though there was no chance about it on *his* side—then she asking him in, maybe, for a cup av tay, he talking civil an' soft the while, keeping his real purpose hid. Ye can see how a slip av a gurrl cud be led into the trap.

"'Let be! Let be!' sez I to him more than wanst. 'Are there not women enough in the wurrld,' I sez, 'that ye must go traipsing after a child?'

"'The child has need av divarshun,' he wud answer.

"An' though well I knew fwhat 'divarshun' gin'rally meant for Strayker, I cud not go to Karlstrom with only me suspicionings for fear av making a bad business worse. All I cud do was to pray that the saints might protect the lambkin, an' hold me tongue in me head. But many's the time since I have wished I had took the chance an' gone."

A cattle-train shuffled past on the down track, the car-loads of hogs raising a din which drowned the rumble of the wheels.

"Lord help the crew av that Noah's Ark!" exclaimed Tim, petulantly. "Why is it the noble steer will go quietly to slaughter, rayjoicing in his myrtherdom, whoilst the undaycint pig must puncture heaven with his cries?" And not until the train had moved beyond all hearing did the little Irishman's wrath abate.

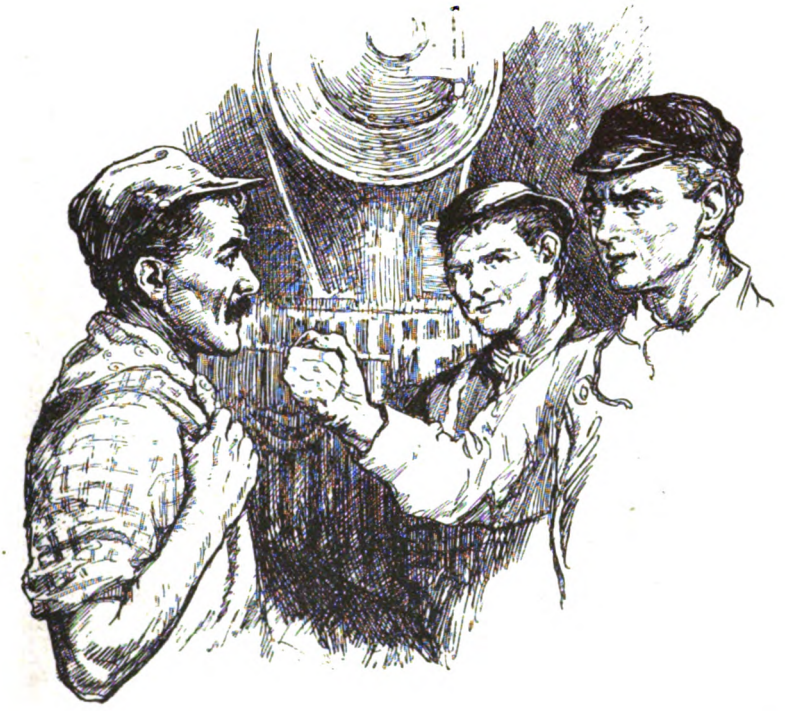
"How did it end?" Tim picked up the thread at last. "How cud it end with a gurrl meaning no harm, except an' only in one way? One day Annette was missing, an' the next, an' the next. Karlstrom was nigh out av his senses, an' telegraphting to iv'ry city on the map, with only the watchfulness

"BELIKE 'TWAS A CHANCE MEETING HERE, ANOTHER CHANCE MEETING THERE—THOUGH THERE WAS NO CHANCE ABOUT IT ON HIS SIDE."

av his fireman keeping him from passing signals an' piling his train in the ditch. Then they found her—in the river—her pretty hair matted with weeds, an' the light gone out av her eyes forever.

" Ye might think Strayker wud have left the road when he saw the results av his wurrk.

" ' Strayker,' sez he, ' av all the men alive an' in the wurrld this day, yeself is the least fitted to walk the land. The soul is rotten in ye. An' if I shud rid the wurrld av your carcass, men wud thank me for the deed. But if I hold me hands from killing ye, 'tis not because I cud not, for between me finger I cud break ye in



" ' NEVERTHELESS,' HE SEZ, ' DEATH SHALL COME, AN' YESELF WILL KNOW IT WHEN IT IS TOO LATE.' "

But in addition to his other sins the baste had the sin av conceit, an' he had hid his steps so well he thought he cud stay an' brazen the matter out. Karlstrom, however, went away, the sup'rintindint giving him leave, back to the North to tramp in the forests 'till he cud see things clear. Then after a time he returned an' went out again on his run.

" Maybe a month went by, maybe two, I disremember. Karlstrom had never wanst spoke to Strayker, or walked past our stall, but this evening he come straight to us an' called Strayker from the cab. Matt climbed down, an' meself went after him, for it was murder I expected to see done. An' yet mistaken I was. Karlstrom spoke low; but his eyes, which was blue-grey, like the steel av a connecting-rod, was hard as steel, an' his mouth iron.

two. Why then do I not, when 'twud be so easy? Because to kill ye wud be showing ye mercy, an' no mercy shall ye have from me, to whom ye showed no mercy.'

" ' Hard wurrds breaks no bones,' sez Strayker, breaking in. But Karlstrom did not heed him an' went on.

" ' Nevertheless,' he sez, ' death shall come, an' yeself will know it when it is too late. Ye wud flee, but cannot, for soft arrums shall hold ye. An' the signal-lamps shall not save. And a headlight shall be a flamin' sword.'

" ' Ye've no ividence,' sez Strayker.

" ' I'm on the track,' answers Karlstrom, looking him square. ' An' when ye see me in the night, leaning from the cab——'

" But Strayker wud not hear him further, but turned sharp an' climbed aboard. He spoke no wurrd, but his face was wurrking

hard, an' when we went on the turntable he cud scarce balance the engine. Before we was out av the house, however, he was laughing his wicked laugh, an' calling Karlstrom names, saying the man was weak in the head. To tell the truth, I was meself fair puzzled, an' not able to make sense av half I had heard. Least av all cud I understand Karlstrom's wurrds about leaning from the cab at night, his being a day run. But before the books was closed I knew—yes, an' Strayker knew also.

"If ye was acquainted with the Midland, as ye are not, ye wud remember that it carries a deal av fruit. Up to the time av which I have been telling the fruit cars had all been hooked on passenger trains, but the comp'ny had come to the opinion it wud not mix traffic, an' it had been planned to put the cars together an' run them as a freight express. Then the growers asked that the cars be painted white—for the advertising, ye understand—an' the comp'ny had ordered it done. The engine which was to take the train over our division was a big Mogul, new from the shops, an' the cab an' tender had been made to match the cars, and a sort av silver burnish —'twas not paint—given the boiler. A kind av circus train it was, an' circus engine, an' all av us was wond'ring who would get the run, when wurrd went round that Karlstrom had asked for it the day he come back, an' that the White Mogul was going to be given to him. I cud not see why he shud want the train after driving the Mail, an' then the time-card for the fruit came out, an' it was to be a night run.

"As maybe I've said, the Wells-Fargo left our end av the division at seven to go West, an' Karlstrom's new train was to leave the other end at about the same time. He wud be coming East, as ye can see, the two trains being timed to pass at a station called Antelope, an' the road having but single irons, one av us wud have to take the turnout for the other.

"For a week, or maybe it was two, we met as scheduled, an' if Karlstrom was in the cab av the Mogul, as av course he was, we saw no sign av him. An' ourselves might have been anywheres else for all the heed he gave to us. Then there come a night when the other train was a bit late, an' we had to wait for it.

"Prisintly we heard the whistle up the line, but we cud see nothing, for 'twas a night av black cloud an' driving rain, the kind av night when a man keeps the window av his cab closed an' his head inside. Then the headlight showed, like a candle on a child's cake it was for smallness, an' a burst av lightning chopping the dark in two, we saw the Mogul. An' Karlstrom was leaning from the cab. Then the skies closed, an' the train was hid. A moment later he was at the switch. And as the engine swung into the turnout the headlight flashed full an' strong along our boiler and into Strayker's face. In a second 'twas gone. But in that second Matt had started in his seat as if a hand had struck him, an' 'twas clear he had remembered Karlstrom's wurrds—that a headlight shud be a flaming sword.

"After our train was under way I had a chance to think. An' I asked meself, wud Karlstrom be leaning out the next night? An' when the next night come he was leaning out the same way, an' the next after that, an' iv'ry night. Strayker wud start from his seat each time the light flashed on him, an' often I wud have to tell him twice that the semaphore had dropped before he cud get himself together to pull out. 'Twas the cold fear had gripped him. An' 'tis me own opinion he wud have left the road then an' there, except that he was deep in some new devil's game, an' the conceit av the man would not let him break it off. So it was again as Karlstrom had said—that Matt wud flee an' cud not, for soft arrms would hold him. He took to drink also. An' when a man that has not touched liquor takes to the drink, 'tis the beginning av the end av things.

"'Tis so I'll forget,' sez he, one day, not sensing fwhat he had said. An' though he did not speak av Netta, I knew 'twas she he meant, an' that guilty he was, guilty as sin.

"However, neyther the cold fear nor the dhrink nor the remembrance av his sin had any effect on Matt when it come to driving his train, an' when the comp'ny gave out the year's prize for the driver with the best record—a gold watch it was—the prize went to him.

"Maybe a month had gone, maybe more—I disremimber. Barring a few minutes now an' again both trains had been on time at Antelope, passing as they was timed to do. Then on a night when we stopped at the station an order was waiting for us. The fruit train was late, an' we had been given fifty minutes av her time. The place where we was to meet them was called Medicine Run, a siding with no station an' no telegrapht operator.

"Our conductor—Burke was his name—signed first to show that the order was received an' understood. But when Strayker took the sheet, he cud only turn it over an' over, his face gone white under the grime, an' the pencil shaking in his fingers.

"STRAYKER WUD START FROM HIS SEAT EACH TIME THE LIGHT FLASHED ON HIM."

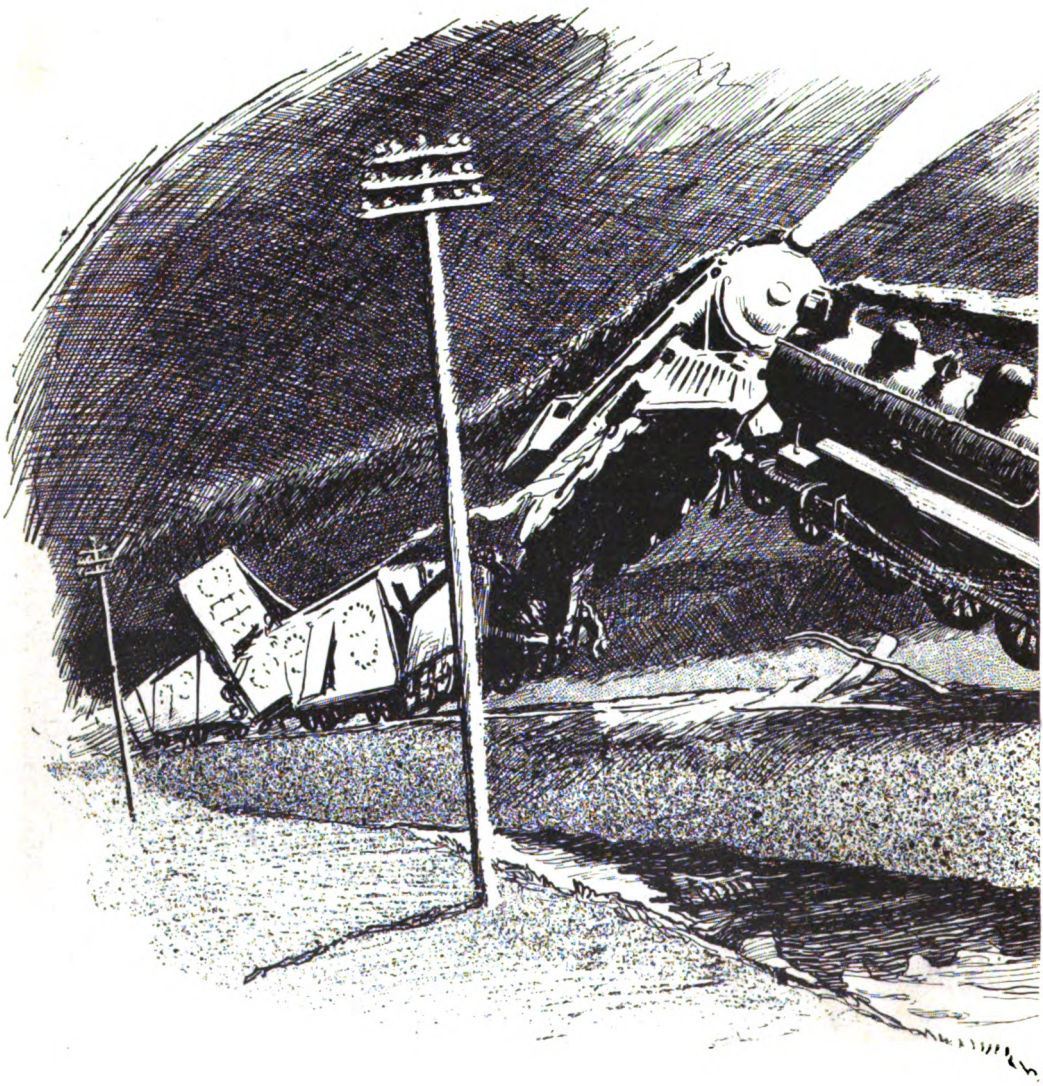
"'Hang it, man!' sez Burke. 'Have ye forgot your name?'

"At that Strayker got down some kind av scrawl, an' the two av us climbed aboard. The semaphore was already down, giving us a safe track, but Matt did not open up.

"'Maybe ye take Antelope to be a summer resort, and are wishful to spend the vacation here,' I sez, when the minutes went by without his getting under way.

"''Tis the lights, Tim,' he answers, an' the horrors was in his voice as he spoke. But he jerked the throttle wide, an' the engine gave a leap that near broke the train in two, an' we shot forward on the woildest ride ever engineman made. Afterwards Karlstrom's wurrds came back to me—that the signal-lamps shud not save—but I did not remimber then.

"From Antelope the track was straight for miles, with no grade that ye cud not have rolled water up. But for all that Matt was



"THE WATER KEPT ME FROM GOING

crying to me for power, an' for more power, as if we had had a velocipede under us instead av an engine, an' I was heaving in the coal by bucketfuls. He had the reverse hooked clear up, an' by the time we was ten minutes out the old rocking-horse was doing fifty mile to the hour at the laste.

"I was still down heaving in coal, though me back was cracking in the middle, when, slam! I heard the shoes clamp on the drivers, an' meself went pitching against the firebox door. I've the scar av the burn to this day.

"'Saints in Heven!' I shouted, jumping for me seat. 'Fwhat is it?'

"'The White Mogul,' yells Strayker, jamming over the reverse, an' nigh blowing out the cylinder heads.

"'Twas moonlight, full moonlight, so that I cud see as far, almost, as by day.

OFF MY HEAD, AN' I CRAWLED OUT."

"'There's no Moguls,' sez I, 'white, green, or any other colour.'

"But he wud not believe, an' only pleaded with me to look again. An' I looked. An' there was a row av scrub trees growing beside the rails.

"By this time the train was at a standstill, an' Burke running up.

"'Fwhat's the trouble?' he called, panting, for he was a heavy man.

"Strayker, who was still in his seat, answers he thinks there do be something wrong with his brakes. So he gets down an' taps on the shoes an' pretinded to examine the pump. But all the time he held the torch so Burke or meself shud not look at him square. Then prisintly he climbed aboard, called in his flag, an' we started up.

"How long we ran I cannot say, maybe twenty minutes, maybe less. I was down

firing, as before, but keeping well back from the boiler head, when, slam! on goes the brakes again, with Strayker crying out that the other train is coming, an' jamming over the reverse. I dropped me shovel, though maybe not so quick this time, an' looked ahead. An' there was no other train, but only a bunch av empties on a siding.

"Burke came up, but he wud take no more av Strayker's excuses.

"'There's nothing wrong with the air,' sez he. 'I can tell by the way it bit on the train. 'Tis me own opinion that it's dhrunk ye are,' he sez, 'an' I'll report it if ye stop again.'

"Strayker, who had steadied himself against the driver, was shaking so he cud scarce stand, the sweat falling off him in great drops. But if he had been dhrunk the day, an' I'm not saying he had been, for I do not know, he was sober then. 'Twas fear come back on him, the cold, black fear; an' he was beyant the stage when liquor can touch. For all the man's wicked deeds I cud not be without pity as we started wanst an' again, him praying me for steam as a dying man prays for air. An' I gave him steam, throwing in coal till the flames licked through the tubes an' out the stack.

"Fwhat with the stops we had made, an the tinkering with the air, an' all, the fifty minutes the despatcher had given us was using up, an' Medicine still siv'ral miles away. But the engine was eating up the ground in big chunks, plunging like a rampaging bull, the cars behind pounding an' smashing at the drawbars. If we had been doing fifty mile the hour before, we was doing sixty then. As well I knew, the track was not ballasted for that weight av train tearing at such a speed, an' I was expecting iv'ry moment we wud go into the ditch, an' though Strayker was still crying for power, me mind was made up.

"'Ye can rack the heart out av yeself,' sez I, 'an' the bowels out av your machine if ye like. It's crazy ye are,' I sez, 'blind crazy, an' ye'll go into Medicine on the steam ye have.' An' I tossed me shovel behind me an' got into me seat.

"We was on another stretch av straight track, but between us an' the siding the road swung around a bit av a hill or butte. Me eyes was on that curve—an' sudden me heart went still.

"Rounding the bend shot a headlight—dim in the moon. But the same moonlight that dimmed the head-lamp showed the train behind clear; the train gleaming behind, an' the engine. 'Twas meself yelled that time, for it was the Mogul an' no ghost—the White Mogul, coming like mad. Karlstrom had disobeyed his orders, as he had meant to do as soon as chance offered. 'Twas for that, an' that only, he had asked for the night run. His wurrds in the roundhouse was plain to me then, an' I leaped across the cab.

"Strayker held one hand on the throttle an' one on the air-valve, but he stirred neyther hand. Petrified he was, an' that's no figure av spache. I drove in the throttle with a blow av me fist; but Matt's fingers were gripped on the air-lever an' I cud not turn it, an' I cud not move the reverse for his body was in the way. The light av the gauge-lamp was on Strayker's face; an' it was green an' yellow, like a corpse. But he was not dead, for I heard him groan. Then I did the only thing left me—jumped.

"I landed in the Run, an' lucky was it I did, for else me neck had been broke at the least. As it was, I went through to the bottom, smashing me shoulder. But the water kept me from going off me head, an' I crawled out.

"Up the track was the wreck, flames bursting from it, an' I ran towards it. But I cud not go fast for the pains shooting through me, an' before I got to the spot the fire was eating iv'rything. In the middle av the fire stood the two engines, upright, the pilots pointing to the sky, an' the wheels locked together in a way strange to see. Karlstrom had been crushed under his cab; an' his fireman, who had ividintly run back over the tank an' tried to cut the air-pipe between it an' the cars, was dead also. An' under our engine, so we cud not get at him, was Strayker, pinned fast, the flames coming nearer an' nearer. . . ."

The warning whistle of the Limited recalled to us the reality of the moment, and we rushed for the door, crowding out on the platform as the great Express catapulted by. A "spare" driver was in the cab of the dead Delaney—for the Limited had been his train.

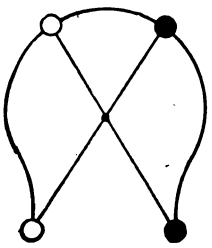
"Aye," said Tim, as he gave the signal to go ahead, "aye, as I said at the beginning, 'Red' got shut easy av his sins."

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

307.—THE HORSE-SHOE GAME.

THIS little game, well-known to the Alsatians, is an interesting companion to our "Noughts and Crosses." There are two players. One has two white counters, the other two black. Playing alternately, each places a counter on a vacant point, where he leaves it. When all are played, you slide only, and the player is beaten who is so blocked that he cannot move. In the example, Black has just placed his lower counter. White now slides his lower one to the centre, and wins. Black should have played to the centre himself, and won. Now, which player ought to win at this game?

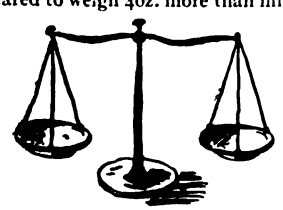


308.—FIND YOUR ENEMY.

WRITE down the year of your birth; add the number of days in last year; deduct the number of months in a year; add the number of days in a week; add your age this year; multiply by 10; deduct the number of days in this year; deduct the number of years in a century; add the number of fingers on one hand; deduct the year the war broke out. If now you substitute for every figure the corresponding letter of the alphabet—A for 1, B for 2, etc., allowing O to remain O, you will be confronted by an enemy. Beware!

309.—THE FALSE SCALES.

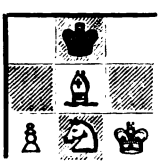
A PUDDING, when put into one of the pans of these scales, appeared to weigh 4oz. more than nine-elevenths



of its true weight, but when put into the other pan it appeared to weigh 3lb. more than in the first pan. What was its true weight?

310.—MATE WITH THE PAWN.

HERE is a pretty little old puzzle by D. Julien. It is quite easy when you hit on the idea. White to play and mate with the pawn in five moves. Part of board is omitted to save space.



311.—A RELATIONSHIP PUZZLE.

A CORRESPONDENT informs me that this is a well-known catch in Greece. One man says of his companion: "This man's mother was my mother's mother-in-law." What was the relationship?

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

303.—REFLECTED WRITING.

MAN is a symmetrical animal—symmetrical to a median vertical line. As a result his actions are often symmetrical, the movements of his left hand, for example, frequently being an exact reflection of those of the right hand. Describe a number of lines and curves in the air with your right hand and will that the left hand shall do what the other does; the movements of one hand will be a reflection of those of the other. Now take a pencil in each hand, place the points together on a sheet of paper, and write a word with the right hand, willing that the other hand shall do the same thing. The left hand should produce an exact reflection of the writing. And the pencil in the right hand can be dispensed with, the movement of the forefinger being sufficient. In this way reflected handwriting can probably be written by anybody without difficulty.

304.—ACADEMIC COURTESIES.

THERE must have been 10 boys and 20 girls. The number of bows girl to girl was therefore 380, of boy to boy 90, of girl with boy 400, and of boys and girls to teacher 30, making together 900. It was not said that the teacher made any bows, and the given total, 900, excludes their possibility.

305.—THE TWENTY-TWO GAME.

APART from the exhaustion of cards, the winning series is 7, 12, 17, 22. If you can score 17 and leave at least one 5-pair of both kinds (4—1, 3—2), you must win. If you can score 12 and leave two 5-pairs of both kinds, you must win. If you can score 7 and leave three 5-pairs of both kinds, you must win. Thus, if the first player plays a 3 or 4, you play a 4 or 3, as the case may be, and score 7. Nothing can now prevent the second player from scoring 12, 17, and 22. The lead of 2 can also always be defeated if you reply with a 3 or a 2. Thus, 2—3, 2—3, 2—3, 2—3 (20), and, as there is no remaining 2, second player wins. Again, 2—3, 1—3, 3—2, 3—2 (10), and second player wins. Again, 2—3, 3—4 (12), or 2—3, 4—3 (12), also win for second player. The intricacies of the defence 2—2 I leave to the reader. The best second play of first player is a 1.

The first player can always win if he play 1, and in no other way. Here are specimen games: 1—1, 4—1, 4—1, 4 (16) wins. 1—3, 1—2, 4—1, 4—1, 4 (21) wins. 1—4, 2 (7) wins. 1—2, 4 (7) wins.

306.—THE WRONG MOVE.

PLACE a Black knight where the White knight is and a White pawn at Queen's 7th. Now White announced his last move, "Pawn takes knight, becoming a knight, checkmate!" This was quite correct, only he picked up the wrong Black knight. If he had taken the other knight, as intended, it was checkmate. It must have been a Black *knight* that he captured, or the mate is not possible.

The CASTAWAYS.

By

W. W. JACOBS.

Illustrated by Will Owen.

CHAPTER XI.

"BE good," said Mr. Biggs.

Mr. Bob Watson, his assistant, who had got the afternoon off, waved his hand and strode away jauntily. Nearly at the gate however he paused, and, eyeing a small figure that had just entered, turned round and signalled to Mr. Biggs. The small figure, supporting an enormous left cheek with a not over-clean hand, scowled at him darkly, and continued on its way to the garage. Mr. Watson, much interested, followed.

"Yes, sir?" said Mr. Biggs, with a wink at Mr. Watson. "What can I do for you, sir? Why, bless my soul, I seem to know that face! And yet somehow I don't seem to know it. Do you know it, Bob?"

Mr. Watson shook his head. "It's a perfect stranger to me," he said, in a puzzled voice. "Seems to have a sort of likeness to that silly little page Albert."

"It's much better-looking than Albert," said Mr. Biggs; "better nourished, too."

"It's something like our Albert might be, though, after kissing a honey-bee what didn't want to be kissed," maintained Mr. Watson.

"I've got a message for you from the guv'nor," said the boy, speaking with difficulty from the right-hand side of his mouth.

"It *is* Albert!" said Biggs, with an air of great surprise. "Well, I never did. How well you are looking, Albert! Why, your left cheek is almost grown-up."

"Tooth-ache," said Albert, indistinctly. "Abscess. I've got to go to the dentist."

"Well, run away, Albert," said Mr. Biggs, with a benevolent smile. "We don't want to keep you. But it's a pity to spoil that cheek."

"You've got to take me," said Albert, with a horrible leer of triumph. "Mr. Carstairs said so. To Bosham, thirteen miles off. I like motoring."

Mr. Biggs's smile vanished with a suddenness that was almost startling, and he stood gazing in helpless fury at the small figure before him.

"I like motoring," repeated Albert, making a praiseworthy attempt to smack his lips. "And you are to start at once. Mr. Carstairs said so. Mr. Markham has been on the 'phone, and I have got an appointment at three. Hurry up!"

Hardly able to believe his ears, Mr. Biggs caught his breath, and for one brief moment toyed with the idea of putting both cars out of action. Then his gaze fell on the grinning Watson and his expression changed.

"If you want something for yourself, Bob," he said, taking a pace towards him, "you've only got to say so, you know."

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"I don't," said the other, retreating. "So long. Be good."

The few but powerful words wrenched from Mr. Biggs died away in the recesses of the garage. He tore his jacket from its peg, put on his cap with a bang, and, walking to the front of the car, started the engine. The unexpected appearance of the butler provided the finishing touch to his discomfiture.

"Why don't you make haste, Albert?" demanded the butler, with a fine disregard of Mr. Biggs.

"I did tell him to hurry up, sir," said the boy. "I suppose he is doing his best. I think he is."

A weird, choking noise, instantly suppressed, proceeded from the interior of the suffering Mr. Biggs.

"Get out of the way," he said, addressing the butler; "I'm coming out."

He came out so suddenly that the butler had to side-step with more haste than dignity. The car went on for sixty or seventy yards, and, pulling up, waited for the indignant Albert to overtake it. His attempt to get up in front was promptly frustrated by the chauffeur.

"In behind," said that gentleman, briefly.

"I ought to ride in front by rights," said the boy, rebelliously.

"'IT IS ALBERT!' SAID BIGGS, WITH AN AIR OF GREAT SURPRISE."

"You ought to be buried by rights," retorted Mr. Biggs, dispassionately. "Get in, unless you want me to drive off without you. And hide that face in a pocket-handkerchief—if you've got one."

He sat looking straight in front of him, turning a deaf ear to the instructions given to the boy by the butler, who had come up—instructions on the need for haste if the appointment was to be kept and trouble with Mr. Carstairs avoided. Also that it was a business visit, and no "joy-riding" was to be permitted.

"And consider yourself lucky," concluded Mr. Markham, impressively, "that

you have a car to ride in and a fairly capable man to drive you."

The fairly capable man let in his clutch so sharply that Albert nearly rolled off his seat as the car started off. Then he adjusted himself comfortably, and, leaning back, prepared to enjoy himself as much as his malady would permit. It was his first motor-ride, and for a time the aching tooth was almost forgotten.

The village street was somewhat busy, and Mr. Biggs, slowing down through the traffic, went slower still at the sight of a stylish figure in front of the general shop. He brought the car to a standstill, and Miss Mudge, with a bright smile, turned towards him.

"Poor Albert!" said the girl, with womanly sympathy. "Does it hurt you much, dear?"

"Who are you 'dearing'?" croaked the offended youth. "Of course it hurts. If the chauffeur doesn't hurry up I shall miss my appointment."

"Oh, what a temper he is in!" exclaimed Miss Mudge, drawing back in pretended alarm. "Don't let me detain you, Mr. Biggs. Good-bye."

"There's no hurry," declared the chauffeur. "You mustn't take any notice of Albert. Nobody does. Why not hop on and come along with us?"

Miss Mudge shook her head. "I should

"'OH, WHAT A TEMPER HE IS IN!' EXCLAIMED MISS MUDGE, DRAWING BACK IN PRETENDED ALARM."

"Unexpected pleasure," declared the chauffeur, politely.

"Where are you off to?" inquired Miss Mudge, with a glance at the small figure behind.

"Bosham," replied Mr. Biggs. "I'm taking this thing to have a milk-tooth pulled out."

like to," she said; "but I'm only off till half-past four. My lady said I was to be sure and be in by then. She's going out."

"Half-past four?" said Mr. Biggs. "Why, there's heaps and heaps of time."

He leaned across and opened the door, and Miss Mudge, after a moment's hesitation, stepped in and took the seat beside him.

"I hope my hat will stick on," she said, doubtfully. "It wasn't made for motoring."

"I'll go easy," said Mr. Biggs, regarding it with open admiration. "If I might say so, it suits you wonderfully."

Miss Mudge sighed. "You ought to have seen the one I had last year," she said. "It's a pity that fashions change so. You no sooner get something that suits you than something else comes in."

"How is this for speed?" inquired Mr. Biggs, who was doing a gentle twelve miles an hour.

"Just right," said Miss Mudge. "I like going slow; you can see the scenery better. Talking about scenery, did you know I'm going with my lady in the yacht? She's promised to take me. It ought to be heavenly."

Mr. Biggs's face fell. "Must you go?" he inquired.

"Why, I *want* to go," said the other. "I wouldn't miss it for worlds."

The chauffeur's face grew more sombre. "And leave all your friends behind?" he said, reproachfully.

"Perhaps they'll be glad to get rid of me," said Miss Mudge, flippantly. "Besides, I sha'n't leave them all behind; Mr. Markham is coming to look after things. Mr. Carstairs thinks a lot of him, I am told."

"I suppose Markham told you so," said the chauffeur, trembling with wrath.

The girl shook her head. "Everybody says so," she replied, softly.

Mr. Biggs drove on in silence. Vitriolic things trembled on his lips, things unfit for the delicate ears of Miss Mudge.

"I wish October was here," she said, presently. "I've always wanted to see the world, and it's delightful to see it that way. No trains to catch, no packing up and moving from place to place. It's heavenly. If I don't have a good time it won't be my fault."

Mr. Biggs grunted, and, looking straight before him, drove on steadily.

"Don't you wish you were coming?" inquired the girl, leaning towards him.

"Do you wish I was?" countered Mr. Biggs, also leaning a little bit out of the perpendicular.

"I shouldn't mind," was the reply.

Mr. Biggs leaned a little more in her direction, until a tendril of hair brushed lightly against his cheek. He drove on in a kind of pleasant dream, until a sensation of hot air playing on the back of his neck brought him suddenly back to earth again. He turned fiercely, and the pallid face of Albert receded to a safe distance.

"Hurry up," mumbled that young gentleman. "I shall miss my appointment."

"I'll 'hurry' you," said the indignant chauffeur, in a fury. "How dare you stick that unwholesome face of yours against a lady's? What do you mean by it? *What* did you say?"

"I said it wasn't so close as yours," replied Albert, "and neither it was. I've been watching you. You were told to get me to the dentist's at three."

To Miss Mudge's great surprise, Mr. Biggs touched something on the wheel and the speed increased every second. When the speedometer was showing thirty miles per hour she looked at him inquiringly, and in return got a faint wink from his left eyelid. The speedometer climbed up to thirty-five and then the needle began to drop back again.

"Something wrong," said Mr. Biggs, with another faint movement of the eyelid. "Sparking-plug, I think."

He pulled up fifty yards farther on, and, ignoring the request of Albert for information, raised the bonnet and peered in. Then he came back again, and, requesting the girl to stand up, raised the lid of her seat and took out some tools.

"Anything wrong?" she inquired.

"Nothing much," he replied. "A matter of ten minutes or so. I'm sorry for 'Face-ache,' but it can't be helped. That's the worst of motor-cars. One moment you are bowling along at forty miles an hour, and the next you are waiting for somebody to give you a tow to the nearest garage. I remember once, before I came to Mr. Carstairs——"

"Why don't you hurry up?" demanded Albert.

"Sorry, sir," said Mr. Biggs, in tones of deep respect. "I'll be as quick as possible. Perhaps you'd like to get out and stretch your legs a bit? I feel as if I could work faster if I didn't have your eagle eye on me all the time."

Albert cast a malevolent eye upon the tittering Miss Mudge, but made no reply, and the chauffeur, whistling in the preoccupied fashion of a busy man, set to work. The girl got out and sat on the bank, rising after a time to loiter up and down the road.

"Haven't you nearly finished?" she said at last. "You've got to get me back at half-past four sharp, you know."

"That'll be all right," said Mr. Biggs, looking at the clock. "There's time to draw

all Albert's teeth and rig him up with a set of new ones. I've just finished."

He closed up the bonnet and, putting his tools away, started the engine, and climbed to his seat, followed by Miss Mudge.

"It's a shame," she giggled, as they sped on. "How can you tease the poor child like that?"

"Can't be helped," said Mr. Biggs, in a loud voice. "Nobody can prevent accidents. But for that we should have kept our time."

He was rewarded by an understanding glance from Miss Mudge, and, somewhat pleased with himself, drove the rest of the way in high spirits.

"Look slippy, my lad," he said, amiably, as he pulled up at the dentist's. "Shut your eyes, open your mouth, and mind you don't swallow the nippers."

"Five-and-twenty past three," said Miss Mudge, as the door opened and the boy disappeared.

"You'll be home at a quarter-past four," said Mr. Biggs. "Just take care of the car for a moment; I want to get something."

He went off up the road and disappeared into a confectioner's, returning after a short interval with a large box of chocolates dangling from his forefinger by a piece of pink ribbon. He placed them on the girl's lap and, declining a share in favour of a cigarette, noted with warm approval the correctness of her table-manners. He felt that he could sit and talk to her for hours.

"A quarter to four," she said, suddenly.

"He won't be a minute now," said the other, confidently.

Miss Mudge consumed three or four more chocolates, and then, closing the cardboard box, sat tapping it impatiently with the tips of her fingers. Her restlessness communicated itself to the chauffeur, and two or three times, with an air of hurrying things, he stood up and peered at the dentist's windows. They stared blankly at him in return.

"I shall get into trouble," said the girl, uneasily. "You'd better drive me home as fast as you can, and then come back for him."

Mr. Biggs shook his head. "He's a disagreeable little beast," he said, slowly, "and he'd jump at the chance to make mischief if he came out and found us gone. Very likely go by train to Pettle and walk six miles home from there to make trouble."

The church-clock, in a marked, deliberate fashion, struck four.

"I'll fetch him out," snarled Mr. Biggs. "I'll——"

He dashed up the steps and pressed the bell. A maid-servant, after a decent interval, opened the door.

"He's in the waiting-room," she said, in reply to the chauffeur's question.

"In the waiting-room!" exclaimed Mr. Biggs. "Why doesn't he come out?"

The maid stared at him. "He's waiting to be attended to," she said, firmly.

"Wait——" gasped Mr. Biggs. "Wait—— Where is the room? I want to see him."

He followed close on her heels and burst into a stiff, cheerless-looking room furnished with soiled copies of *Punch* and illustrated papers of the year before last. Albert, who was reading a paper, put it down and eyed him languidly.

"What's all this about?" demanded the chauffeur. "Why aren't you ready? What have you been doing?"

"Missed my appointment," said Albert, with a faint sigh. "I *told* you it was for three o'clock. But I don't mind waiting; this is a most interesting story."

"You hurry up," said Mr. Biggs, truculently. "Else you'll be sorry for it, you miserable little toad!"

"You've no right to talk to him like that," said a middle-aged woman, who was the only other occupant of the room. "In my opinion the boy is a perfect little gentleman. He's already given up his turn to two people; and I'm sure he's suffering."

"Very good," said Mr. Biggs, after a merciful attack of speechlessness. "Very good; I'll tell Mr. Carstairs of this."

"Mr. Carstairs wouldn't mind; it's the thing he would do himself," retorted Albert, in a saint-like voice. "He——"

"Ready for you now," said the maid, opening the door and beckoning.

Albert arose and, with a somewhat disappointed glance at the clock, went out.

"We shall just do it," said Mr. Biggs, returning to the car. "I don't suppose it'll take more than a minute now."

He started the engine and resumed his seat. Ten minutes later he switched it off again, and sat in a state of suppressed fury listening to the complaints of his distressed companion.

"It's all your fault," she said, hotly. "If you hadn't been so clever teasing the boy, it wouldn't have happened."

"You enjoyed it," urged Mr. Biggs. "I saw you smiling."

"You won't see me smile again in a hurry," said Miss Mudge, grimly. "But go

on, put the blame on me! Anything more you would like to say?"

She pitched the box of chocolates on the floor of the car, and, opening the door, stepped out and paced restlessly up and down the foot-path. At exactly twenty minutes to five the dentist's front door opened, and Albert, with a somewhat improved appearance, paused on the top step for a few words with the maid. He sauntered down the steps just as Mr. Biggs started the engine.

"Where have you been?" demanded the chauffeur, glaring at him. "Don't you try and tell me that it has taken him all this time to draw a tooth."

"No, it wouldn't be true," said Albert. "He found another tooth with a hole in it; so I told him he might as well stop it. He's got a thing like a sewing-machine, and——"

He drew back appalled before the frenzy in Mr. Biggs's face.

"Are you going to start, or are we going to stay here all day?" inquired Miss Mudge. "Get up, Albert."

"It's your place," said the boy, quickly.

"I'm going in behind," said the girl.

"I'll come, too," said Albert.

"Not with me, you won't," said the girl, getting in and closing the door. "Make haste and get in. There's a box of chocolates on the floor you can have."

"No, he can't!" grunted Mr. Biggs, as the car started.

"They're my chocolates," said Miss Mudge, "and I can give them to who I like. Pick them up, Albert."

The boy, with his eye on the chauffeur, obeyed.

"Now eat them."

Albert shook his head, but, the command being repeated, drew a large chocolate, decorated with a crystallized violet, from the box, and delicately bit off the end. Slight sucking noises testified to his enjoyment, and after a minute or two of very justifiable nervousness he settled back in his seat and gave himself up to the full enjoyment of the position.

"Thank you for a very pleasant afternoon," said Miss Mudge, with a toss of her head, as she descended at the gate. "And thanks so much for getting me into trouble."

"It wasn't my fault," said the hapless Mr. Biggs.

"Being done by a babe in arms like that!" said Miss Mudge, with a glance at Albert. "I'd be ashamed of myself. Thank goodness you're not coming to sea with us!"

"I don't know so much about that," said Mr. Biggs. "Perhaps I can if I want to. Perhaps Lady Penrose won't take you—now."

Miss Mudge slammed the gate.

CHAPTER XII.

MR. BIGGS put the matter of the yacht right next day. It appeared from his own showing that he could be of great use in the engine-room, while, on the other hand, as an honest man and an Englishman, he had a great objection to staying at home on full pay with nothing to do for it. Permission was accorded so readily that, relating the matter to Mr. Watson afterwards, he was half-disposed to regret that he had not asked to go as a passenger.

"Cheek'll do anything almost," assented Mr. Watson. "What do you know about a ship's engines?"

"More than you know about a car's," retorted the other. "When a man's got a head for machinery—which you haven't—nothing comes amiss to him. I haven't seen the machinery I couldn't understand, yet."

"That shows your sense," said Watson. "It's no good going out of your way to look for trouble, I mean. However, I hope you'll have a good time; I'm going to. I wonder the guv'nor don't take the housemaids and the gardeners as well. They could lend you a hand in the engine-room."

As a matter of fact, the rest of the staff, with one exception, manifested no desire to tempt their fortunes on the stormy deep. Board-wages and an easy existence for some months was the height of their ambition. The exception was Albert, and, until his desires were made known, a little confusion was caused by his unusual behaviour.

"I'd sooner have a ghost in the place," declared Pope to Carstairs one day. "The little beast simply haunts me. What's the matter with him?"

Carstairs shook his head. "I seem to have seen more of him lately," he remarked. "I have nearly fallen over him twice."

"Whenever I turn my head, there is that infernal boy somewhere near," said Pope. "And there's a curious pale smile about him I don't like. D'ye think it's mental?"

"No, no!" said Carstairs, hastily. "Of course it isn't. Don't give way to such fancies; they're unhealthy. Your head is all right."

"Mine?" gasped his incensed friend. "Mine? I am talking about the boy's. He's getting very strange in his manner.

Only yesterday he stole up behind me and picked a bit of fluff off my coat. I didn't know he was there, and it gave me quite a turn."

"That's odd," said Carstairs, looking perplexed. "He picked two bits of fluff off me this morning. At two different times."

than that of the average page, received the summons with some trepidation. The slow arranging of Mr. Pope's pince-nez added to his discomfiture, and he stood trying to think out replies to any misdemeanours with which he might be charged.

"Have you quite recovered from your visit to the dentist?" inquired Carstairs.

"'THEN WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY IT?' INQUIRED POPE, TAKING OFF HIS FOLDERS AND SHAKING THEM AT HIM THREATENINGLY."

"Let's have him up and question him," said Pope, crossing to the bell. "Tackle him gently."

"Bait your coat with a piece of fluff," said Carstairs, with a grin; "that would give us an opening."

Albert, whose conscience was no clearer

"Me, sir? Yessir," replied the boy.

"You don't appear to be quite well," said Carstairs, musingly.

"Perfectly well, sir," said the puzzled Albert. "Thank you, sir."

"Then what do you mean by it?" inquired Pope, taking off his folders and

shaking them at him threateningly. "What do you keep getting in my way for and following me about? And Mr. Carstairs?"

"Nothing, sir," said Albert. "I—I didn't know you had noticed it, sir."

"That's an admission," said Pope, turning a red face to Carstairs.

"I—I wanted to ask you something, sir," said the boy, turning to the latter.

"Well?"

Albert twisted his hands together. "I wanted to ask—whether—I could go," he said, desperately.

"Go!" repeated his astonished employer. "Why, of course you can. Why didn't you ask before?"

The tension of Albert's features relaxed, and was succeeded by a radiant smile. "I thought there mightn't be room, sir," he said, simply.

Carstairs turned with a perplexed gaze to Pope. "Room?" he repeated, slowly. "Room?"

"On the boat, sir," explained the boy, staring in his turn.

A startled grunt from Mr. Pope and a sudden exclamation from Mr. Carstairs added to his mystification. Carstairs was the first to recover.

"Of course," he said, smiling. "Very thoughtful of you; but I have no doubt we shall be able to find room somewhere."

"If we couldn't," said Pope, with great solemnity, "we'd make it."

Albert eyed him dubiously, and, retiring in good order, closed the door and danced downstairs in an ecstasy of delight.

"That settles it; we must now redouble our efforts to get a satisfactory craft," said Carstairs. "It would never do to break faith with Albert."

"He would be much more disappointed than Lady Penrose," said Pope. "We had better go up to-morrow and see that yacht broker Talwyn mentioned. Tollhurst offered to come with us. He—he is going to help me buy guns and things."

"Guns?" said his friend, staring.

"Must have a shot-gun," replied Pope, reddening. "One thing is, it will be useful down here. And perhaps a rifle. Every man ought to know how to use one. Might be useful on board. You never know."

Carstairs groaned. "You've been talking to Tollhurst," he said, accusingly. "All right. We'll mount a couple of brass cannon as well. What about a black flag?"

Pope turned a deaf ear. At the age of fifty he had resolved to become a sportsman; a resolution partly due to the narratives of Captain Tollhurst, and partly to the rabbits which came out in their thousands in the park at sunset. Up to the present he had contented himself with taking sighting-shots at them with a walking-stick, developing an accuracy of aim which he felt sure would prove of value later on. Birds—half a mile distant—had also been satisfactorily accounted for.

They took the business of the yacht first next day; a story of a rhinoceros and Captain Tollhurst helping to beguile the tedium of the journey. A story told so modestly that only the thoughtful listener could appreciate the high courage and resourcefulness displayed by the survivor.

It was a matter of surprise to Carstairs, who had never given the matter much thought, that the choice of steam-yachts of the tonnage required was a somewhat limited one, but by what the broker described as an extraordinary slice of luck, the very craft they were looking for was at that moment undergoing repairs at Southampton. Photographs and plans seemed eminently satisfactory, and they left after making an arrangement to view the *Starlight*, fourteen hundred tons, three days later.

"It would have been more interesting," said Tollhurst, as they returned to the car, "to have hired a small sailing-yacht."

"You mean more dangerous," said Pope, accusingly. "So far as I am concerned, I prefer size and security."

The captain laughed and shook his head. "A little element of uncertainty, that is all," he replied.

"Not for the ladies," said Pope, solemnly.

"I had forgotten them," was the reply.

"I expect we shall have all the uncertainty we want," said Carstairs, amiably; "but if you find the voyage palls we can always land you and Pope at some place where you can risk your lives. And pick you up afterwards—if there is anything to pick up. Now, what about these guns?"

Tollhurst gave a direction to Biggs, and five minutes afterwards they pulled up at a gunsmith's and laid the foundations of a small but efficient armoury. A hammerless ejector gun, a sporting rifle, a rabbit rifle, and an automatic pistol of the newest pattern went home with Pope in the car.

"To-morrow," he said, toying with the little rifle, "I will get my hand in on a few rabbits."

Tollhurst nodded. "I will come with you," he said; "but I should advise the

gun to begin with. A rabbit is a small target, you know."

"You know best," said Pope, somewhat ungraciously. "I thought there would be more sport with a bullet, that is all. The shot-gun is too certain."

"Sheer butchery," said Carstairs, with a glance at Tollhurst.

"They ought to have a chance," said Pope, judicially. "However, if Tollhurst doesn't think so, perhaps I had better take the gun."

"Take the rifle by all means, if you wish," said Tollhurst. "The head is as good a place to hit them as any," he added, with a return glance at Carstairs.

It was a scarcely perceptible glance, but Pope saw it and lapsed into silence, which, except for an occasional grunt, he maintained until the end of the journey. Upon one thing he was determined: he would astonish them all next day.

"AN EMPTY TOMATO-CAN PERCHED ON A POST DEFLECTED THE BULLETS AT TEN YARDS' RANGE IN A WAY THAT WAS ALMOST UNCANNY."

He arose at six next morning, and went out for a little preliminary rifle-practice. Ten shots at the trunk of a beech tree at fifty yards furnished no data, the wood simply swallowing the bullets without revealing the place of entry. An empty tomato-

can perched on a post deflected them at ten yards' range in a way that was almost uncanny. If a tomato-can could behave in that fashion, what might be expected of a rabbit? Perturbed in spirit, Mr. Pope returned to the house and, meeting Biggs on the way, gave him the rifle to clean.

In the result he resolved to thin the rabbits out (his own expression) with the gun, and soon after six that evening, accompanied by Tollhurst, he set off to a sandy bank on the confines of the park. Trees and gorse afforded good cover, and, stealing up with the caution of a Red Indian, he discharged both barrels at a little group forty yards distant. The earth swallowed them up immediately, including the two he had hit.

"I'll swear I winged them," he said, after a search.

Tollhurst nodded. "Gone to die in their holes," he said, briefly. "Often happens. We must try farther along now."

They went on in silence, Pope with his lips pursed and his gun ready. Restless rabbits, unable to stay in one place for more than a second or two at a time, he ignored. He wanted something less mobile, and it presented itself at last in the shape of a huge elderly rabbit which was sitting under an oak tree taking the air. Trembling with excitement, Pope held his breath, and was just taking careful aim when the veteran arose and went for a gentle constitutional behind a clump of gorse.

"It's gone," whispered Pope.

"Plenty more," said his friend. "Be quicker next time."

Mr. Pope attributed his failure to that advice. Left to himself, he felt sure that he could have shot rabbits. As it was, bits of gorse were blown to pieces and patches of turf rose into the air. At the end of an hour Tollhurst, looking in the direction of the house, muttered something about dinner.

"I'll come when I've got a rabbit," said Pope, grimly. "You go."

Left to himself, he flitted noiselessly about and blazed away at intervals, until at length, tired and dispirited, he sat down and drew out his cigarette-case. A figure approaching in the dusk drew near, and revealed itself as Mr. Biggs.

"Any sport, sir?" inquired the chauffeur, respectfully.

Pope told him. He also referred in scathing terms to the acrobatic proclivities of his quarry.

Mr. Biggs looked longingly at the gun. "Long time since I shot any, sir," he said, with a sigh.

"Can you shoot?" inquired Pope.

"I've shot thousands in my time, sir," said the chauffeur, "when I was a boy, at home."

Pope took up his gun and held it out to him. "Kill a few thousands now," he said, vindictively.

Mr. Biggs thanked him and withdrew noiselessly. An occasional report indicated that he was doing his best to carry out instructions. Pope, leaning back with a pleasant sense of fatigue, went on smoking. It was not until he had finished his third cigarette that he saw the chauffeur returning.

"Any luck?" he called out.

Mr. Biggs shook his head. "I won't blame them," he said, frankly. "I suppose my eye is out, or my hand; perhaps both."

"But——" said Pope, and pointed to three rabbits the other was carrying.

"Not mine, sir," said Biggs. "Wish they were. I picked them up as I went along."

Pope stared at him. "They must be mine, then," he said, in a puzzled voice.

"Unless anybody else has been shooting," said Mr. Biggs, gazing afar off. "They're fresh killed. You must have been shooting better than you thought."

Mr. Pope thought so too, and, extending his hand for the rabbits and the gun, set off in the direction of the house. Mr. Biggs accompanied him half-way, and then, with a respectful "Good night," turned off.

Tired but happy, Pope reached the house, and, rejecting the offer of a footman to take his burden, made his way to the dining-room, and stood framed in the doorway. A slight exclamation from Tollhurst called attention to his presence.

"Well done," said Carstairs.

Pope smiled. "Not much of a bag," he said, modestly.

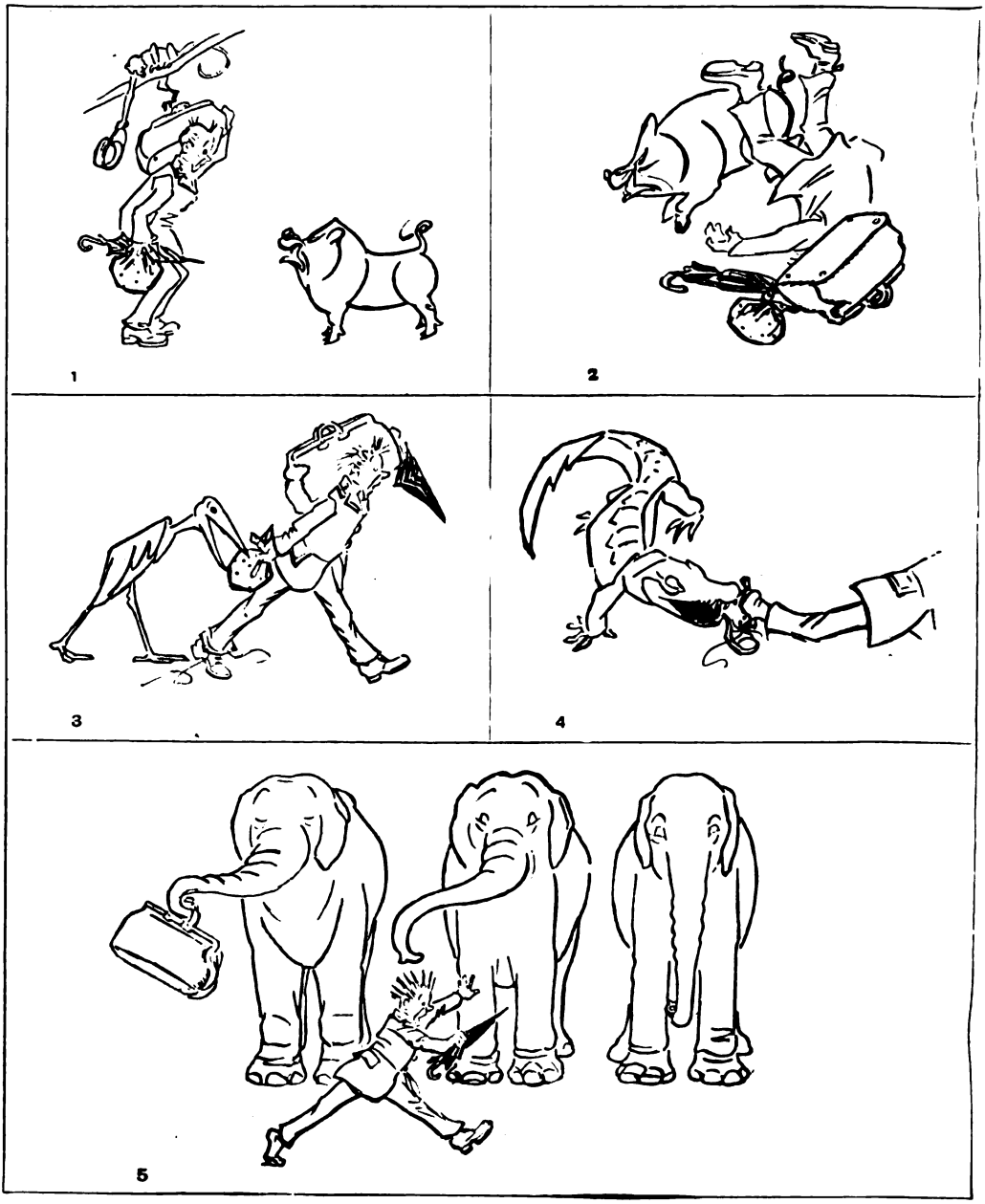
"Poor things!" said Mrs. Ginnell, shaking her head at him. "Murderer!"

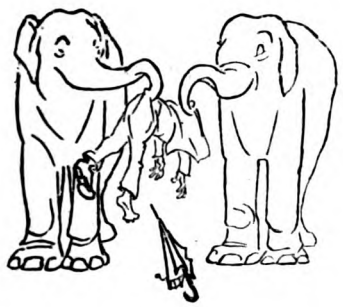
"Not at all," murmured Pope.

(To be continued.)

THE NEW KEEPER'S DREAM.

By J. A. SHEPHERD.





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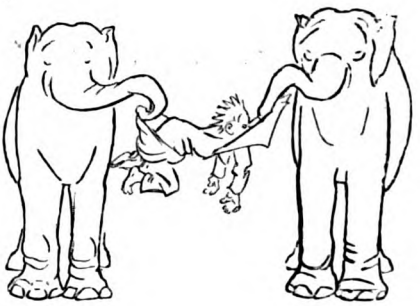

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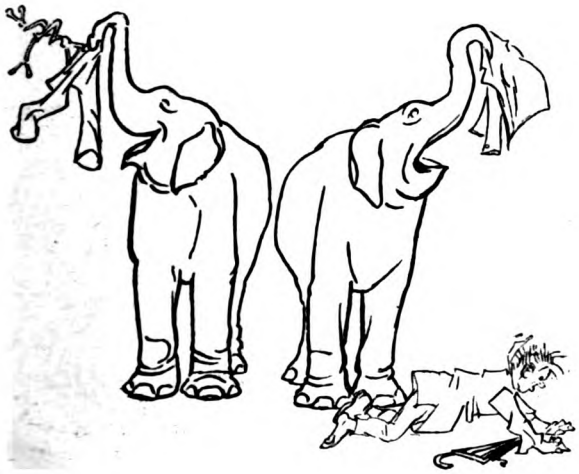

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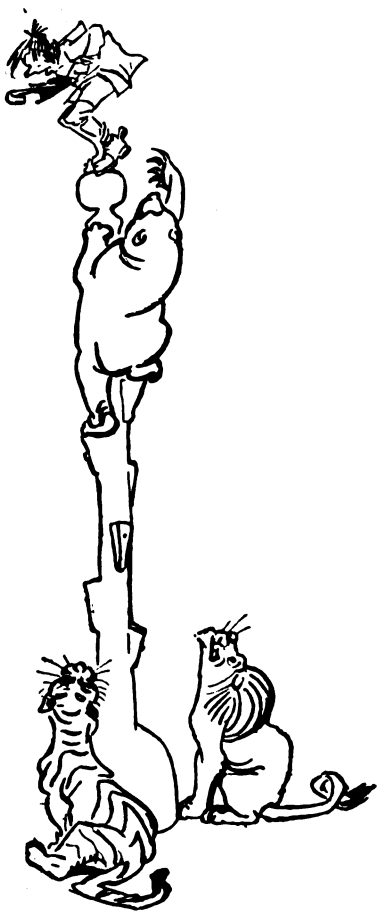

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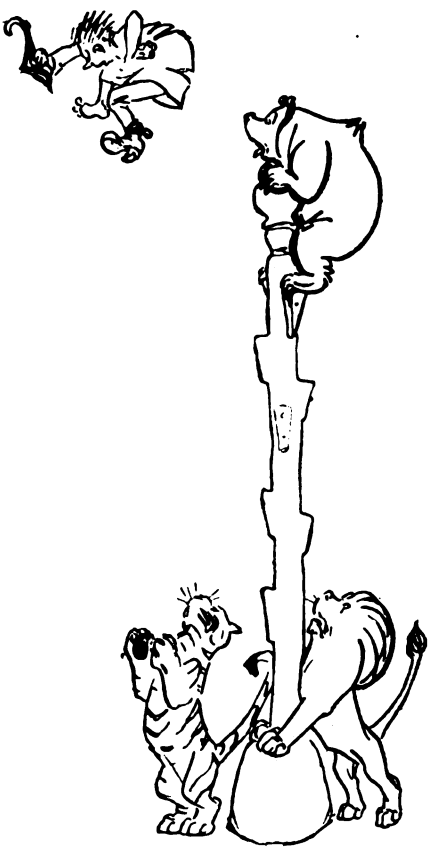

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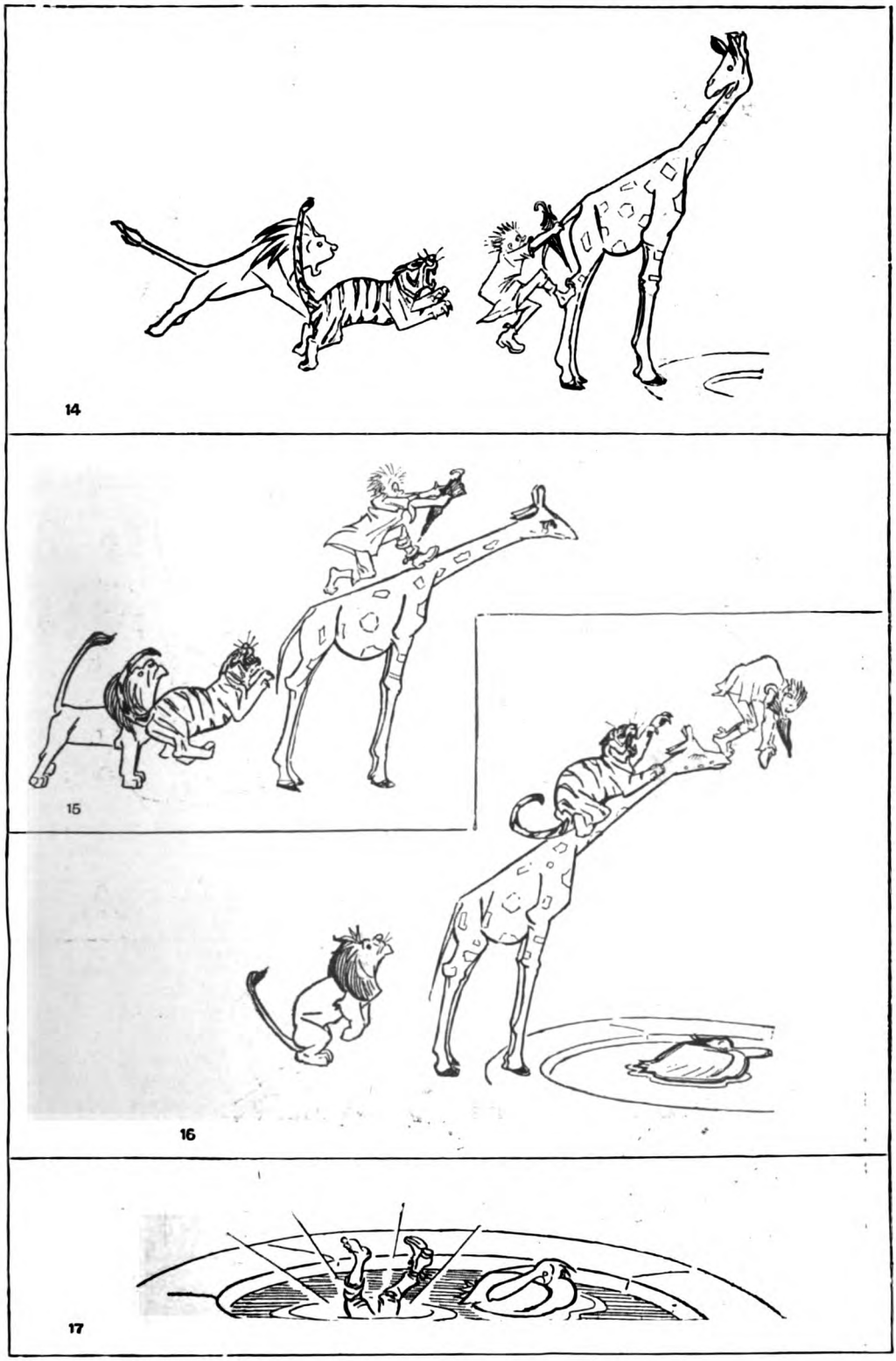
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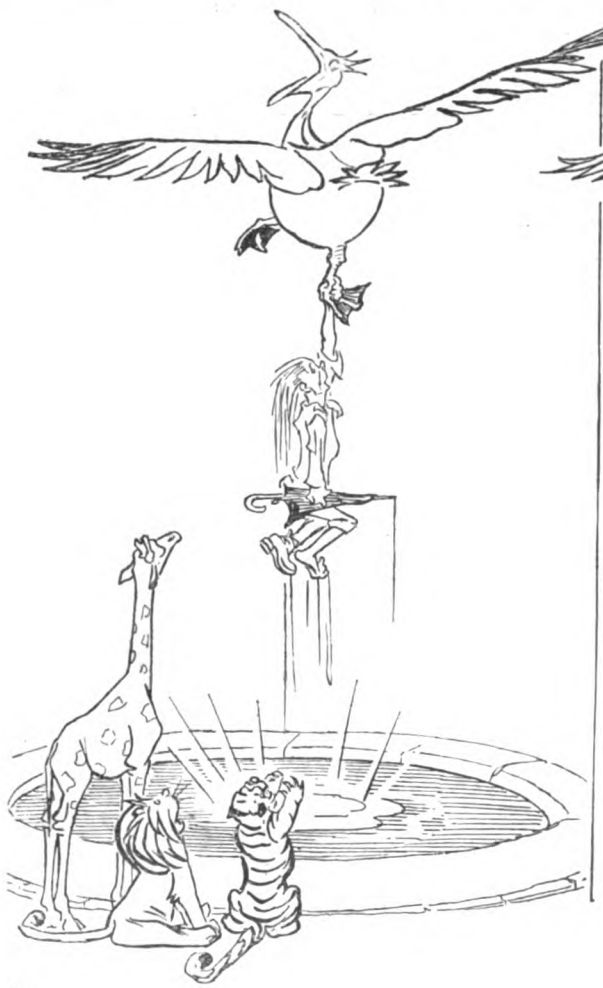

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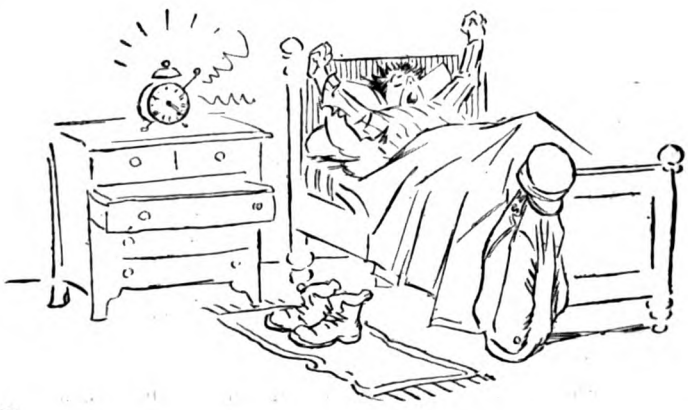

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HUSHED UP.

By LLOYD OSBOURNE.

Illustrated by Warwick Reynolds.

MY eyes were smarting and it was all I could do to control myself when I walked out of Mr. Rigney's office—discharged. I had given eight years of my life to the Exchange Bank, and thought that such long and faithful service might have counted in my favour—but it didn't. I was second cashier, drew four pounds a week, with an extra bonus at Christmas, and spent every penny I earned. A young fellow who dresses well and goes out a great deal can hardly do much saving on that salary. To be quite honest, I had never tried, realizing that a good appearance is everything in business and that promotion is apt to hit the man who has plenty of friends and social connections.

My trouble was that I made myself too popular, and that in a quarter old Rigney could not forgive. He was one of those white-haired, high-coloured, high-tempered old boys, with a tremendously swollen sense of his own importance—a fine man to work for if you did not tread on his toes, and the bitterest kind of enemy if you did. And so, naturally, when I fell in love with his daughter Emily, and she with me, and the time at last came to break the news to papa—all the blessing I got for my half share was a bellow of insults and a month's notice as per contract.

But Emily, who was twenty-one and of age, said she would marry me, father or no father, just as soon as I could support her, and this ought to have been a great comfort to me—though it wasn't. I was too young then—only twenty-seven—to realize that such gentle, tender women, whom one has associated with softness and ease and luxury, can abandon everything very gladly for the man they love.

I could have bitten my tongue off afterwards for having told George Preece all about it—unbosomed myself as they say—and thus added to my humiliation. He was our chief cashier, and had about as much use for me as a motorist for broken glass; but I was caught by his pretended sympathy, and was so bursting besides with misery that I had neither sense nor reason. And so he said it was a shame and all the rest of it, while he was inwardly gloating and enjoying it all to the hilt. He was withered, oldish man, with a cackling laugh and a pointed grey beard that would waggle like a goat's after he had said anything especially disagreeable. Often you did not realize how disagreeable it was till you went home and pulled out the prickles. After this talk I felt as though I should never get another position, would lose Emily for certain, and that everybody would be laughing at me as a cheap fortune-hunter who had got just what he deserved. That was the kind of comforter George Preece was; Job, in comparison, would have sounded merry and bright.

If only I had had a little money saved up I should have chucked that last month in the bank and done without the four pounds a week.

I changed to a cheap boarding-house, gave up cigars, economized all I could, and in my after hours did my utmost to find another position. But old Rigney was so abominably unjust that he would not give me a recommendation, and in these circumstances it was not to be wondered at that people everywhere turned me down. None of the financial houses wanted anything to do with an assistant bank-cashier who was leaving under a cloud—the inference was too obvious. Yet those miserable days had some very bright spots in them. I had good friends who made it easy for Emily and me to meet, and every time we did so she put fresh heart into me.

Though she tried to hide it from me, Emily was having a hard time too, what with her father's constant bullying and her having to conceal the whole matter from her mother. To tell her would be sure to bring on an "attack," which to Mrs. Rigney was a shield against all the cares of existence.

My time at the bank was nearing its end when, one morning, a very strange thing occurred. Happening to notice George Preece coming out of the manager's office, I was suddenly struck by the fact that he looked

perturbed, and that his hands were trembling so much that he could scarcely pick up a paper he had dropped. As though to avoid my glance he hurried away towards the rear of the bank, where we had a separate way into the adjoining safe-deposit—a place that was always dark and very little used, with two superannuated telephone-boxes in it that somehow had never been removed. Wondering if he had been taken ill, I asked Heighton to keep an eye on my counter and went back myself to see what the matter was. Well, I found Preece sitting in one of the boxes, huddled up and shaking like a man in an ague. As I peered in he started violently, and spat out: "Don't you spy on me, sir! Don't you spy on me!" And this with such a gleam of yellow teeth and such a convulsive wagging of his beard that he reminded me of a badger being poked by a stick.

"I only thought you might be ill," I said, coldly, showing by my tone how insulted I was.

"I was just looking at these boxes," he returned, trying to pull himself together, and changing his tone until it was almost cringing. "Why, I thought you were a ghost, jumping at me like that, and the words came out before I knew what I was saying." Then in an emboldened sort of way he went on: "I must tell Mr. Rigney to get rid of these boxes; there is no sense in littering up the place with things that are no longer used."

"None whatever," I agreed, turning away, but conscious for the first time of a strong reek of whisky. One did not have to be very clever to connect it with Preece's disappearance in the box; yet to anyone who knew the man and his abstemious, miserly ways, it seemed an almost incredible thing for him to do, nipping whisky there in the dark at eleven in the morning.

I tell you I did a lot of thinking when I went back to my desk and began to connect the trembles and the whisky with something that must have happened in old Rigney's office. And I had more to chew on still when Reuben Pottwynd arrived in a taxi-cab and walked straight into the manager's office. He was our most important director, and I noticed that

"DON'T YOU SPY ON ME, SIR!"

he did not send in his name, but pushed the door right open as though he had been telephoned for and was expected. After that it was not much of a surprise to see old Glass, another of our directors, arriving ditto, looking mighty flurried and upset, and close on his heels August Lest, of the Bank of Commerce, and also one of our directors, striding past me towards the office.

The next thing that happened—and you may be sure I did not miss any of it—was old Rigney's confidential clerk emerging quietly to ask Mr. Preece to "kindly step into the office." But by now Preece seemed to have got his assurance back, and never turned a hair as he followed him, even stopping to give some brief instructions to Phillips in the exchange department, and speaking in his ordinary dry, composed voice.

The meeting, or whatever it was, lasted a very long time. Once old Rigney came out with August Lest, and the two entered the steel vault and spent quite a while there, and then returned, looking very grave. By now the whole bank was in a sort of electric tension, though, of course, we were all too well trained to show any sign of it to the public, or even to one another, except for an uplifted eyebrow perhaps, or a little dig as you passed somebody.

But finally, when they all came out together—all except Mr. Rigney—old George appeared the most unconcerned of the lot, and surprised us by going back to his work as cool as a cucumber. It was the three directors who looked upset, and they strode along close together and silent, as though they were holding themselves in till they could get past us and out of earshot.

That night I went for a spin in the park with some friends, who brought me home and dropped me on my doorstep at ten or so. As the boy let me in, he said there was a gentleman up in my room waiting to see me. I went up the stairs two at a time, not unprepared to find that my room had been ransacked by some plausible thief, and was even ready to grapple with the intruder, when imagine my surprise as I banged open the door to see—yes, of all people in the world—old Rigney sitting on my bed! I guess it was the only place he could find to sit on, the room being so small and littered; but the sight of him there fairly took my breath away.

"Halloa, Rawlinson!" he said, rising and offering me his hand in a stiff, yet unbending, sort of way. "I have been waiting here two hours to see you."

"Two hours!" I exclaimed, not knowing what to think, and tumbling off a lot of things to give him a chair.

He settled himself in it, and then slowly drew out a cigar and lit it, offering me his case at the same time.

"I am in a beast of a hole," he said, gazing at me with those formidable old eyes of his and blowing out a mouthful of smoke. "I want help, and I am willing to pay heavily for it."

"Yes, sir," I said, hanging on his words.

"Suppose I should give you my daughter and two thousand pounds?" he continued. "That would count with you, eh?"

I gasped out that indeed it would—that I would go through fire and water to win Emily. I was altogether confused and incoherent, and these trite expressions, so inadequate to the occasion, must have sounded utterly idiotic. Then, as the pause lengthened, I added, with a certain misgiving, "Of course, you would not expect me to do anything that wasn't—wasn't right?"

But instead of answering he blew out more smoke and stared at me ambiguously. When at last he did speak, I noticed it was not to reply to my question.

"You are a fine, vigorous young man," he said. "You have the reputation of being quite an athlete. I guess you could take an ordinary-sized man of fifty-four and kill him as easily as I could stamp on a blackbeetle."

"I wish you would tell me what you want," I said.

He pondered for a moment, and then walked nervously about the room.

"When I think of the way I have been done, I can hardly stand it," he burst out, explosively. "I can't formulate anything, can't see any daylight anywhere. And the lawyers—pah! nothing but a lot of babbling old women, who can't suggest a thing, can't do a thing. That's why I have come to you, Rawlinson. It's a situation that calls for a young man, for somebody that can take risks and hit hard, who hasn't been so long stewed in cowardice and compromise that he has lost all his nerve. I am too old to grapple with this myself—that's the trouble. I am too old."

"I'll help you if I can," I said, as he seemed to come to the end of his breath. "You haven't told me yet what it is you want."

"You know George Preece," he exclaimed, savagely, with a sputter of hatred at the name. "George Preece, the most trusted *employé* at the bank; been with us twenty-five years; a fellow I would put my hand in the fire for as to honesty and all that. Well,

hanged if he didn't come into my office this morning, and say—yes, his very own words—'I am going to retire, and I want twenty thousand pounds to retire on!' When I blew up at that, what do you suppose he said next—George Preece, mind you, a man who has been with us from the very start, and whom I trusted like a twin brother! 'I have taken two millions of bills and bonds and specie out of the safe,' he says, cooler than I am talking to you this very minute, 'and I have buried it in some place where you couldn't find it in a thousand years. If you want to send me to prison you can,' he says, 'but if you want to get your two millions back you will have to retire me with a vote of thanks and twenty thousand pounds, as I said. It's for you to choose,' he says. 'Take it or leave it,' he says."

I think Mr. Rigney found a bitter kind of zest in my astonishment; in my whole-hearted anger and indignation. I could feel the change in his manner towards me—an increased warmth, an increased consideration. It was not a little flattering that this strong, proud, self-sufficient man should have sought me out in his trouble. I was very much touched indeed.

"But all he can actually rob you of is the cash," I said, after reflecting a moment. "Bills, mortgages, bonds, and such things can all be duplicated, and their titles proved by our files."

"While the bank goes on the rocks in the meanwhile," he protested. "Proving destroyed titles is the most vexatious job in the world, and takes more time and trouble than you have the faintest idea of. We might just as well hand the bank over to a receiver and be done with it. That is where he has us when he says he is willing to go to jail. No; Rawlinson, I have looked at this from every angle, and there is only one way to stave off a crash, and that's to catch the fellow alone somewhere and choke him until he shows us where the stuff is—and it is up to you to do it!"

"Me?" I cried.

Rigney nodded grimly. "Yes, you," he said.

Then, drawing out his pocket-book, he produced a cheque and passed it over to me.

"For expenses," he explained. "One thousand pounds for expenses, and if you need more you shall have it without limit. All I can say is that, if you want to be my son-in-law, go ahead and save us."

"One question," I said, taking the cheque and beginning to feel my heart beat thickly. "Do I understand there is to be absolutely no compromise with the fellow? No beating down his price?"

"No!" he exclaimed, snapping out the word. "Put detectives on him, learn his habits, and then jump on him some dark night, and——"

He left the sentence unfinished, and stared at me significantly through a cloud of smoke.

"The only way to argue with such rascals is through their hide," he added.

Then he rose, took his silk hat and cane from the bed, and held out his hand.

"It is a big order," he said. "But if anybody can put it through I know you will. Good night."

I ushered him down the stairway and went out with him to his motor-car. We shook hands again in the dark, and his last words were to say that I had taken a load off his shoulders. I returned indoors, feeling I had put a ton on mine. Then I roused the boy, asked him to make me a pot of strong coffee, and sat down to think, think, think.

That miserable, wasted night taught me only one thing—my limitations as an amateur criminal. It was so easy for Mr. Rigney to say "catch him somewhere and take it out of his hide," yet to do either seemed hopelessly beyond my powers. I rose in the morning quite despairing, and went to keep an appointment I had with Emily at the Minturns'.

She had never looked to me so pretty as she did that morning, with something about her so fresh and exquisite, so flowerlike and adorable, that I felt, as always, a sense of my own unworthiness, and a sort of wonder that she could care for me at all. She saw at once that I was in the depths of gloom, and had hardly kissed me before she took me to task—holding to the lapels of my coat and looking up at me in tender reproach.

"He's been worrying," she said. "Worrying dreadfully."

"He has," I admitted.

"And he wants to make it just as hard for us as he can," she said, with a little catch in her voice. "As though our being young is nothing, and loving each other is nothing, and the only sensible thing would be to jump off the wharf because nobody will give the poor dear twenty pounds a month."

"Last night somebody gave me a thousand," I said, drawing out her father's cheque, and enjoying her astonishment at the sight of it. "It's that I want to talk about."

We sat down side by side on the sofa, and I described the interview with her father.

When I finished she got up and walked about the room greatly excited.

"Your father is asking the impossible," I said. "I have looked at it from every angle, and the whole idea is impossible."

She came back to me flushed and quivering.

"Surely you are going to make a try for it, Oswald?" she said. "Surely you don't mean to leave dad in the lurch? Can't you realize what this means for us if only you could succeed?"

"I spent all last night thinking of that," I returned, dismally. "It's true I might manage to waylay old Preece—there are a dozen ways of contriving that; but what the dickens would I do with him afterwards? I can't burn him at the stake, can I, or hang him up on a meat-hook?"

Emily gazed at me as though she were hardly listening; it was plain her quick wits were at work and her attention was all within. Then she bent down and murmured something in my ear.

"Do that to him, and he'll tell all right," she added. "Just you try it, Oswald."

I ought to have jumped up and hugged her, but I could do nothing but sit there dumbfounded. In one minute Emily had accomplished more than I had in ten sleepless hours. Of course Preece would tell. How could he help telling?

The affair immediately took on a new aspect—passed from dreamland into reality. In the ensuing exhilaration there was hardly time to congratulate ourselves. The solution of our worst problem made the easier one loom up like a mountain—how to decoy Preece to a lonely place and nab him. But Emily had no second flash of inspiration. After much unavailing talk I determined to go and consult Sam Brander. Sam was not only one of the most fearless men alive, but had that dash of irresponsibility which is so necessary in all desperate adventures. Yes, I would go and consult Sam, and off I set in high spirits, after a parting with Emily that made me feel all over again how intolerable it would be to fail.

"THEN SHE BENT DOWN AND MURMURED SOMETHING IN MY EAR."

Sam was a newspaper photographer who passed his cheerful existence amid fires and murders and death-chambers and fashionable weddings. In appearance he was short and thick-set, with an engaging smile that atoned for many social deficiencies.

If I am to be honest, I had better admit right off that the subsequent history was largely Sam's. I had not talked with him ten minutes before I put him on the pay-roll at

two pounds a day and expenses—not that he wanted to take a penny—but just to make him feel the seriousness of the undertaking, and to anchor him to it. The first thing he did as my paid assistant was to sharpen a pencil and write "Notes" on a large sheet of foolscap; the second was to say that of course we had to take in the police. By this he did not mean the chief of police, whom he thought very little of, but a certain Inspector McBride, who was "the power behind the throne at headquarters."

It would be waste of time to repeat the endless conversation we had on the subject; to describe the plans that were so elaborately reared, only to topple like a house of cards at some belated—and fatal—criticism. Naturally, we did not wish to call in McBride until we had worked out a comprehensive plan of operations. "We have to give him something to chew on," said Sam; and this effort to obtain chewing material for the inspector was the most head-racking ordeal I ever went through with. Sam, in spite of his enormous wealth of criminal experience, was less resourceful than might have been expected; and in the end it was I who unravelled our difficulties and evolved a stratagem that might be hoped to place old Preece helpless in our hands.

That same night we had our talk with Inspector McBride, who came to us in plain clothes, and who had already been given an inkling of our affair. He was a big, reddish person with a wonderful capacity to sit stolidly on a chair and say nothing, but he had a keen face, in spite of its heaviness, and steely blue eyes that pierced one like gimlets. He listened to us with an increasing gravity that seemed to bode ill for our enterprise, till at the end he suddenly brought down his hand on his knee with a resounding wallop, and cried "Good!" in a big, hearty voice. Then, when everything had been entered in his little book and he had risen to take his departure, he remarked, with a worried expression:—

"It's you two who will have the hardest job—making Preece squeal."

"Oh, he'll squeal all right before we are through with him," said Sam, confidently. "Rawlinson here has a plan that would make a wooden Indian yelp."

The following night, in accordance with our prearranged programme, Sam and I reached the bank at one, and were silently admitted by Mack, the Irish night watchman, who had been taken into the secret. The bank was a ghostly-looking place at that hour, and the effect of our entry in its great cavernous interior was eerie in the extreme. We spoke in whispers and moved about on our noiseless, rubber-soled shoes like a pair of burglars, with a strange, unreasonable, and rather daunting apprehension. Outside we knew that Mack was patrolling up and down the pavement, and that in various recesses farther distant there were enough hidden policemen to prevent anyone interfering with us.

At twenty past one, and faithful to the minute, Mr. Rigney arrived and was as stealthily admitted as we had been. We had hardly more than greeted him when next came August Lest, then James Glass, then Reuben Pottwynd, each at a minute or two apart, so as to attract as little attention as possible from any chance passer-by. Lest had brought them all in his car, which he had driven himself and had left in a side street.

My first command was to get the safe open. Next I had several of the electric lights turned on and shielded with handkerchiefs, so that it was possible to move about without recourse to our blinding little torches. Then I stationed Rigney and Lest near the safe, with instructions to close the armoured door to within an inch of shutting as soon as Sam and I had dragged Preece inside.

None of the four directors knew what we meant to do with Preece. I don't believe old Rigney cared a fig what we did, nor August Lest either, so long as we got the two millions back. They were hot under the collar at the way they had been victimized, and small wonder; but Pottwynd and Glass suddenly took fright as they saw these cold-blooded preparations, and the latter, a podgy little fat man with gold spectacles, began to gasp out that he wouldn't be a party to a murder—no, by George, he wouldn't.

For a time it looked as though the whole thing was destined to go up in smoke, and there ensued a tumultuous argument in which old Rigney took an emphatic and overbearing part. With his white hair awry, and his face crimson with scorn and anger, he let fly at these two weak-kneed confederates with all the vigour at his command and gradually reduced them to submission. I wondered why Mr. Rigney had bothered to have them at all; but from something that August Lest dropped I believe the latter had insisted on all the directors shouldering the responsibility together. Were we to fail and become involved in a horrible scrape, we should certainly be better off with Pottwynd and Glass sharing the responsibility. But, as

active assistants in a dangerous enterprise, they were two good-sized millstones around our necks.

This is a good time to explain what Inspector McBride was doing in the meanwhile. Preece lived in a boarding-house in Baker Street—and he was to be closely shadowed and his return home assured. Then at a quarter to two McBride was to rush up there in a police motor and, announcing that the bank safe had been dynamited by burglars, insist that Preece should return with him to ascertain the extent of the loss. In such circumstances Preece could hardly dare to refuse to go; he was still ostensibly chief cashier and would simply have to go. Preece, of course, was to be told that all the directors were likewise being reached by the police, thus giving the impression of a general hubbub at the bank. The cleverness of the scheme was that, if true, it would have suited Preece down to the ground—to have all the blame for the loss put on the burglars, who would thus screen his own robbery in the most unexpected manner.

You may imagine that it was a pretty breathless business waiting for all this to happen. Sam and I placed ourselves near the entrance, watches in hand and our hearts beating like sledge-hammers.

I tried to comfort myself with the thought of marrying Emily, tried to realize the happiness that was in store for me, and how soon we might be spending our money in furnishing our little nest. But Preece's face kept rising between me and these fleeting visions—Preece's obstinate, withered, gnarled old face—and with it I seemed to gaze beyond on vague outlines of men in broad arrows.

At last we heard the reverberation of a car tearing down the street. Mack poked his head in at the door, nearly causing us to jump out of our skins as he announced hoarsely, "It's them, sorr, it's them!" Sam and I braced ourselves. The car roared ever nearer; it stopped, and we heard voices and the heavy tread of feet descending. Then the heavy feet tramped towards the door, and it was flung open by an authoritative hand, revealing McBride on the threshold, backed by three policemen. In their midst was Preece, as pale as death and looking extraordinarily shrunken in comparison with these giants. McBride put a hand on his back, and shoved him in with a terrific thrust that sent him sprawling on his knees.

"Here's the goods," he said, in his big voice. "I am through with him. Good night."

With that he turned about face with his giants, and a moment later we heard the whir of the disappearing car.

It was singular that our first action was to help Preece to his feet. In his fall he had hurt his knee, and now as he stood up he kept rubbing it and alternately looking at us in a baffled sort of way. His mouth was open and he was breathing hard. He gave me the impression of being badly frightened, but defiant.

"So this was all a trick to get me down here?" he panted out, vindictively. "A plot between you and those low police, who will smart for it before I am through with them. Well, it won't do you much good, I can tell you that." Then he moved towards the door. "Let me pass," he commanded, in a voice he tried to make loud and intimidating. "If you dare to lay hands on me, I warn you there will be trouble."

I don't know what trouble he meant. He didn't know himself, of course; but it was just a forlorn bluff to make his way past us. But he did not get far. In an instant we had him in our grasp, squeaking and struggling and kicking with all his might, which, fortunately for us, did not amount to much. He was a dried-up wisp of a man, and as easy to handle as a child. Between us we rushed him to the rear, fearing his increasing outcries a good deal more than any harm he could do to us, and popped him pell-mell into the safe like a sack of coal. In another moment the ponderous door swung behind us and stopped within an inch of shutting. Then we bound his hands and feet, laid our torches where they could light us, and told him to stop his noise.

"Bellowing won't help you now, Preece," I said. "Why not shut up and listen to a little sense?"

To my surprise he stopped yelling, and with a gulp or two answered, quaveringly:—

"I warn you I have a bad heart. If you torture me you will kill me. I have valvular disease of the heart."

"You have also two millions of other people's securities," I said. "As we cannot get them back any other way, we are going to get them out of your skin. We've got you here where we want you, and the sooner you realize it the better."

"It's I who have got you," he cried out, with sobbing fury. "I wouldn't tell you where they were if you ran me full of needles. Go ahead and kill me if you like; you won't extort a word out of me."

He looked terribly as though he meant it.

"'BELLOWING WON'T HELP YOU NOW, PREECE,' I SAID, 'WHY NOT SHUT UP AND LISTEN TO A LITTLE SENSE?'"

He was not strong in body, but you could feel the inflexible will of the man and his horrible, unflinching obstinacy. He snapped out his defiance like a Christian martyr at the stake, and I recalled with a sinking heart how successfully those bygone saints had resisted every extremity of pain.

"We offer you just one thing," I said. "If you will restore the securities we will agree to take no action against you."

Perhaps he thought I was weakening, or at any rate his answer was a snarling refusal.

"Twenty thousand pounds and not a penny less," he returned, squirming in his

bonds, and looking up at us more defiantly than ever. "You will find that a better bargain than killing a man with heart disease, and I advise you to take it before you have a corpse on your hands."

"Oh, let's get busy," put in Sam, who had been growing impatient. "The fellow doesn't know what he is up against."

"Well, he soon will," I exclaimed, angrily. "Here, give me a hand."

I don't intend to describe what went on in the safe; our task wasn't a pleasant one, and in the telling it might sound awful. Preece, bound hand and foot, was at our mercy, and it became a Red Indian contest between his powers of endurance and ours to make him suffer. Yet I don't see how any fair-minded person has any right to blame us.

This was a case where the law was with the criminal, and the only way to bring him to justice was to go outside it. He came to time within eight minutes, though so craftily that, had it not been for Sam, I should have been completely outwitted. First he said he had put the stuff in a safe deposit under an assumed name. Sam wanted to know what name, what safe deposit, at what rent—shot question after question at him that instantly showed what a lie it all was. Preece was a wretched hand at inventing things. He stuttered and back-pedalled and mixed himself all up. Then he said he had given the securities to a friend to keep. Bang, bang, bang, went Sam at him again. What was the name of the friend, where did he live, what was his business, what was his telephone number? etc., etc. Preece had to admit that this was a lie too, and then declared that he had buried the stuff in Ocean Street, at the base of the fifth electric light pole beyond the end of the tram-line.

This story really held together; it was coherent, and stood the hammering Sam gave it; more than that, it was reasonable. Ocean Street was a lonely, remote road, where hopeful speculators were trying, with very little success, to interest the instalment-buying public. The tram stopped running at midnight, which bore out Preece's tale of going out late, waiting till the last car had started homeward, and then having the whole place to himself. He told us he had made four separate trips, as the gold had been too heavy to carry all at once.

Untying his legs, but leaving his arms still bound, we led him out of the safe to find the directors all awaiting us in a fever of anticipation. Imagine their hum of jubilation when I announced that Preece had confessed and that the stuff was buried out in Ocean Street!

Once that was said it did not take us an instant to get out of the bank and hurry away to August Lest's motor-car. Here we found Inspector McBride, who was tremendously relieved to hear the news, and who crowded in with us to "see the thing through," as he expressed it, and guard us from any possible police interference.

At that hour Ocean Street was the loneliest place on the map. When our search-lights showed that we had reached the end of the electric line we slowed down and ticked off the arc lamps, counting till we reached the fifth, where we all got out. Lest had brought tools, which Sam and I eagerly seized and set to work.

But we might be digging there yet for all we got. After shovelling out tons of loose earth, and making a big enough hole to bury an elephant in, it began to steal over us that Preece was fooling us again. Sam suddenly threw down his spade and, taking an electric torch from one of the onlookers, flashed it in Preece's face.

"It isn't there, and you know it isn't," he exclaimed, threateningly.

Preece, recoiling, mumbled something about our not going deep enough. We should find it all there in four suit-cases if only we dug deep enough. With every word he grew more impudent, more emboldened, conscious, evidently, of the impression he was making on the others, who gazed at Sam and me reproachfully as though we were shirkers. But we knew the fellow was mocking us. He could not keep a sort of subdued triumph out of his voice.

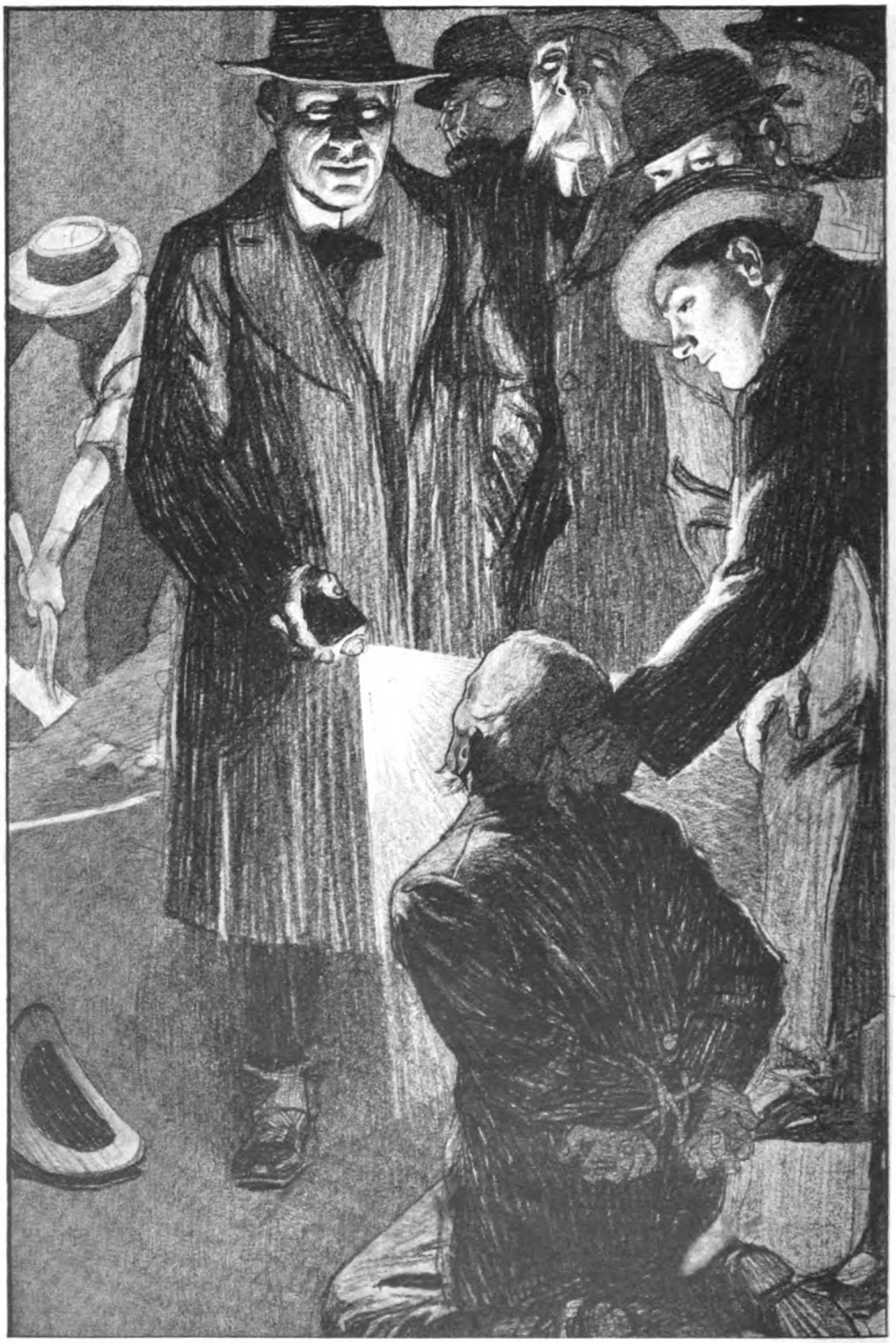
"What he needs is another jolt," said Sam, turning to me in great wrath. "Let's give him another right here."

"That's the only thing to do," I agreed, vindictively.

"Make room, please," said Sam to the others, who had crowded round us. "Our bird is going to sing this time, or I am a Dutchman."

"You haven't gone deep enough," expostulated Preece, trembling in our grasp. Then all at once, realizing that we were in earnest, what did he do but slip down on his knees and bleat for mercy!

"I couldn't stand any more of it," he burst out in a paroxysm of terror. "You'll kill me if you do it again—you'll kill me, you'll kill me. Yes, I was lying; I admit I was lying. It's under the seventeenth post, and that's gospel truth, I swear it." Then, utterly giving way, he began to cry and scream like a madman, grovelling before us in the road



"YES, I WAS LYING; I ADMIT I WAS LYING. IT'S UNDER THE SEVENTEENTH POST, AND THAT'S GOSPEL TRUTH, I SWEAR IT."

and wailing out again and again that it was under the seventeenth post.

We took him at his word, though it was all I could do to persuade Sam to let him off. Sam was burning to pay him back for all this lying and cheating, and could scarcely keep his hands off him. But Preece by now was at the end of his tether—was all in, as they call it—and we had not taken a dozen strokes of the pick at the new place before we struck a suit-case, and pulled it out heavy with gold. One by one, in quick succession, we disinterred the three others, opening them there under the glare of the searchlights just to satisfy ourselves we had not been deceived, and had acquired something more than a lot of old bricks. Mr. Rigney, crouching in the roadway, pawed over the mass of papers in an effort to determine if they were all there, the others aiding him in a buzz of satisfaction as they picked out Breen, Jackson, and Co.'s note for seventy thousand pounds; J. Colles's for forty thousand, and such-like tremendous plums, the loss of which would have been almost irreparable.

Then we all got into the car again and speeded back to Rigney's house in Chestnut Street. It was a strange intrusion at that hour—all these determined-looking, wide-awake, unshaven men, tramping into such a silent place, and throwing their overcoats on gilt chairs, and tumbling out the dirty suit-cases on priceless rugs.

Dawn was breaking before we were finished. Then, when the last bond had been tallied and the last coupon verified, Mr. Rigney, who had naturally taken the leading part in all this, turned to Preece and simply said: "You can get out," which Preece promptly proceeded to do, without a look or a word, slinking away like the whipped cur he was. It was I who opened the door to let him pass, and I was rewarded for this little act of consideration by a glimpse of Emily in the hall, fluttering into the shadow like a silken ghost. She smiled at me questioningly, and I would have run to meet her had I not been loudly called back.

Old Rigney was starting a speech, which was all about me and how I had saved the bank. I cannot bring myself to repeat the wholehearted, splendid things he said of me, amid the uproarious approval of the others, nor describe the handshaking, congratulations, and jubilation that followed. Then, before anybody could cool, and while I was still the hero of the moment, he convened a formal directors' meeting, with himself in the chair, and voted me the two thousand pounds I had been promised, as well as five hundred more to Sam, and a similar sum to Inspector McBride. Anyone peeping in might have thought it all a burlesque, and that it was merely the hilarious end of an all-night spree—with a number of elderly gentlemen the worse for champagne—instead of it being an important meeting of a great financial institution.

In the lull that ensued, and as the rattling milk-carts reminded us it was time to be going home, little James Glass suddenly popped up and asked us, with awe-stricken curiosity, what it was we had done to Preece.

At this there was a hush. I guess there was not a director there who was not on fire, too, to know. At Glass's request every face lit up with expectancy.

"You tell them," I said to Sam, more to keep them on tenterhooks than anything else, and delay the answer.

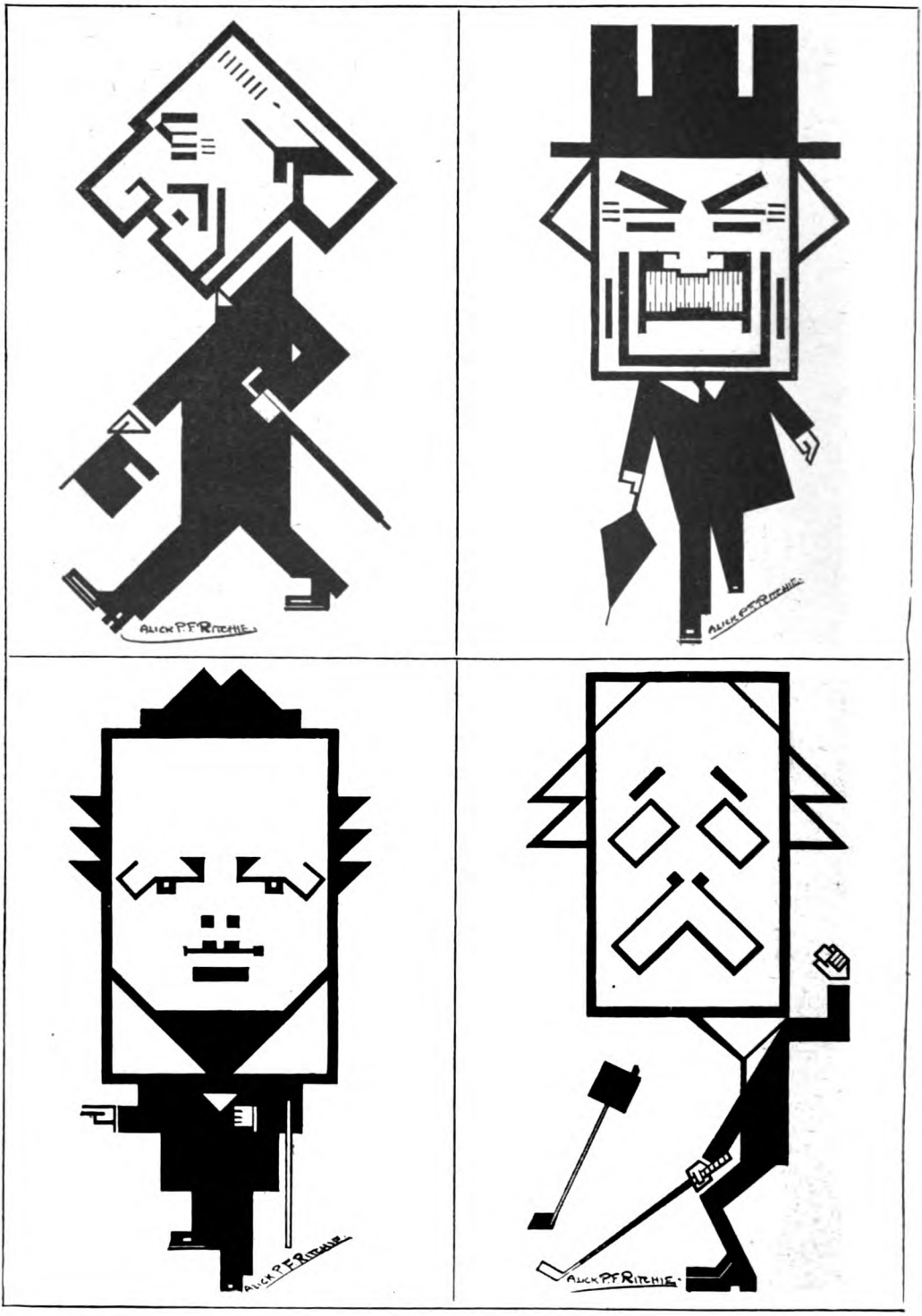
"No; you," protested Sam, playing into my hands, and smiling at the almost painful intensity of their interest. "It was your idea, and it is only fair you should get the whole credit for it."

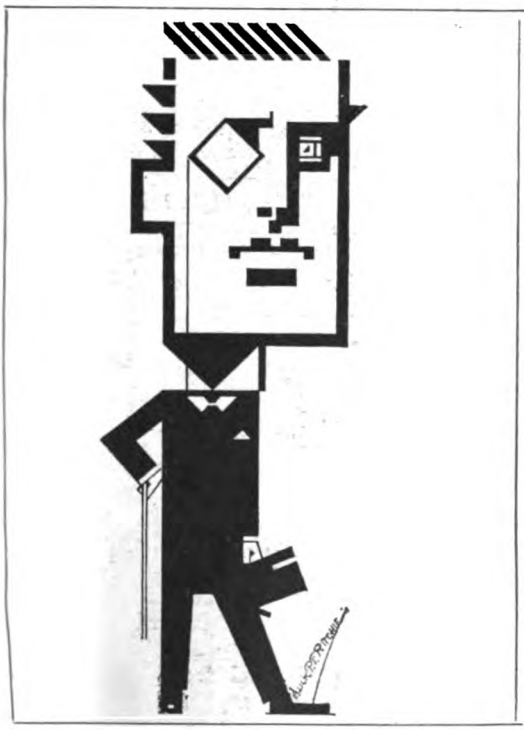
"If you must know, gentlemen," I said, slowly and solemnly advancing to the door, opening it, and beckoning Emily to enter, "if you must know, gentlemen, the idea was not mine at all, but this young lady's."

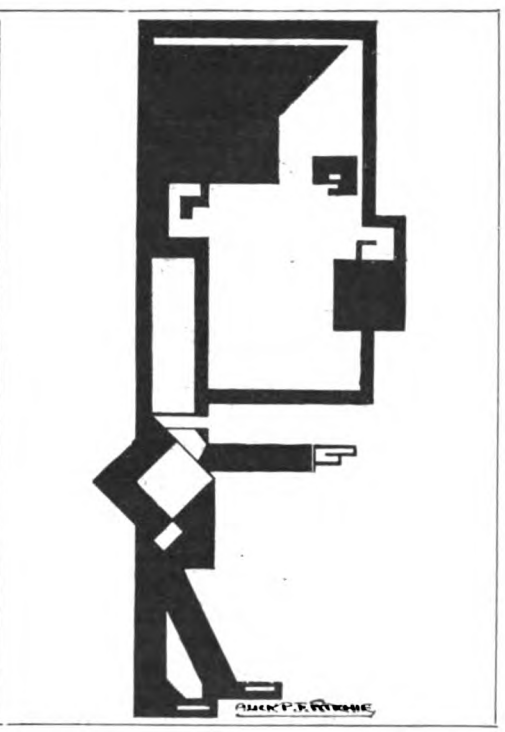
As they looked at Emily, and as Emily looked at them in mutual astonishment, little Glass exclaimed, impatiently, "Never mind whose idea it was, but for the love of Heaven tell us what you did to Preece!"

"Well," I said, holding the suspense till it was well-nigh intolerable, "we just took off his shoes and socks *and tickled his feet with a feather!*"

Something Like People!







ACROSTICS.

Prizes to the value of ten guineas are offered for solutions during the quarter.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 9.

For conscience' sake this noble band
Left trustfully their native land.
And well these patriarchs, we say,
As colonizers led the way.

1. A food that scarcely satisfies
   Will decorator advertise.
2. Monarch in this you have to trace
   Of a mysterious, vanished race.
3. 'Twould be, in peace, at any rate,
   Breach of commandment number eight.
4. A sentimental overflow,
   To calmness and restraint a foe.
5. The person whom in this you see
   Must dreamy and abstracted be.
6. He's curious, often is a bore,
   And terror was in Spain of yore.
7. A social meal the word will name,
   But don't get in it, all the same.

W. B. C.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 10.

The Heads will take you well on road;
The Tails—a gift on kings bestowed;
The Heads and Tails, at their full length,
Will clearly mark a gauge of strength.

1. Its lonely corner would surpass
   A mansion grand with brawling lass.
2. Score after score, page after page,
   In music this was once the rage.
3. To start again one blissful morn
   One's youth with hopes and joys reborn.
4. A skinful—do not turn up snout
   If origin should cause you doubt.
5. A despot who from his safe chair
   And basket scatters wide despair.

LEX.

Answers to Acrostics 9 *and* 10 *should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor,* THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C., and must arrive not later than by the first post on July* 6*th. Two answers may be sent to every light.*

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 7.

1.	N	onparei	L
2.	I	cen	I
3.	G	ri	G
4.	H	itc	H
5.	T	or	T

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 8.

1.	S	o	B
2.	T	yr	E
3.	R	ive	R
4.	A	fa	R
5.	W	e	Y

NOTES.—Light 4. Spar, tar, scar, star. 5. Little Miss Muffet, whey.

RESULT OF THE FIRST SERIES.

The maximum number of points obtainable during the quarter was 38; this number was gained by Beggar, Corisande, and Junius, each of whom wins a prize of £2 12s. 6d. H. H. and Osbo scored 37 points, and they both win prizes of £1 6s. 3d. The real names and addresses of the winners are given below, and these five solvers will be ineligible for any further prize in the acrostic series now running. Beggar: Mr. B. G. Pearce, 5, Ethelbert Road, Bromley, Kent. Corisande: Mrs. Bridges, 27, Hanbury Road, Clifton, Bristol. Junius: Mr. F. C. W. Grigson, Bickley Hall, Bickley, Kent. H. H.: Mr. E. W. M. Lloyd, Hartford House, Winchfield, Hants. Osbo: Mr. W. Stradling, Royal Naval College, Osborne, I.W.

CURIOSITIES.

[We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.]

AN IDEA WORTH ADOPTING.

BY placing the street names in letters of electric light on the kerb, San Francisco developed a brand new idea in street signs. They are more conspicuous than the type used on lamp-posts or metal standards, and by night they are even easier to read than by day. The lights are enclosed in a cast-steel case that is set flush with the kerb both ways. Facing the street-crossing are the letters that spell the name. They are formed of perforations in the metal and are protected by heavy glass, and after dark, when the light shines through them, the eye is caught at once. To make them easily readable by day, the letters are blocked in with white paint. This novel plan was tried in the centre of the city, where the traffic is thickest, and was a great success, particularly in the districts where there are always many tourists and other strangers not familiar with the city.—Mr. C. L. Edholm, Wyoming, Rhode Island, U.S.A.

A NEW USE FOR RED CROSS STAMPS.

OUT here in Valparaiso, Chile, we have been raising funds for the Allies' Red Cross work by means of a series of stamps. These being very brightly coloured, it occurred to me that good use might be made of them for decorative purposes, and I am sending you a photograph of a large stone jar which has been covered with them to very good effect, much of which, of course, is here lost owing to the reproduction not being in colour. — Miss Irene D. Walbaum, 59, Santa Victorina, Cerro Alegre, Valparaiso, Chile.

WHAT IS IT?

NO, not a new species of man or animal, but simply the shell of a crayfish dressed up by

an enterprising chef to ornament the table of a Royal Mail steamer, whilst his tender portions are being devoured.—Mr. F. W. Randell, 58, Pulteney Road, S. Woodford.

SOLUTION OF BRIDGE PROBLEM IN LAST MONTH'S ISSUE.

TRICK 1.—A leads any diamond; B trumps with the 2.

TRICK 2.—B leads 6 of hearts, won by A with the king.

TRICK 3.—A leads any diamond; B trumps with the 5.

TRICK 4.—B leads the 8 of hearts, and Z may do any one of three things. If (1) he trumps low, A overtrumps and leads his other trump. If (2) Z trumps with the ace, A discards a diamond. If (3) Z discards his spade, the 8 of hearts wins, and B follows with a small trump. In no case can Z make more than his ace of trumps.

NOTE.—Every other mode of attack can be defeated if Y Z play properly.

GRAND DOUBLE SUMMER NUMBER

CONAN DOYLE ON THE BATTLE OF THE AISNE

AUG 28 1916
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Treasure in a Cup—
FRY'S Cocoa
See Page 22.

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

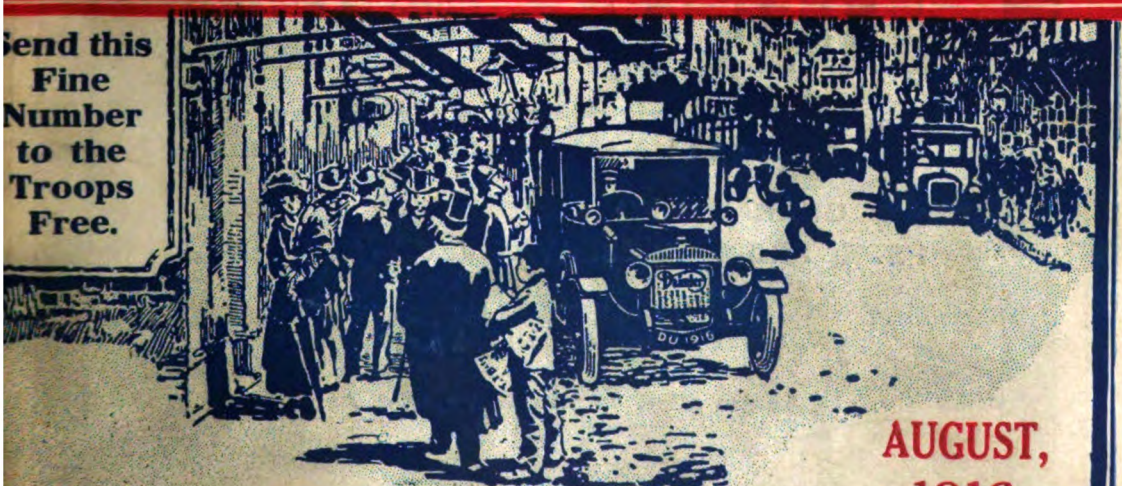
A NEW LONG COMPLETE NOVEL

By ETHEL·M·DELL

The Safety-Curtain

MOST ENTHRALLING STORY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WAY OF AN EAGLE" HAS WRITTEN

Send this Fine Number to the Troops Free.



AUGUST, 1916.

ONE SHILLING NET

Published monthly by GEORGE NEWNES, Ltd., 8 to 11, Southampton Street, Strand, London, England.

Surpasses ordinary milk and most creams.

Ideal Milk is milk and cream as well—and serves every purpose of the two. Its "Thickness" comes from the useless moisture having been extracted; add water and it is milk again.

Ideal Milk is more easy to digest than Dairy Milk—it has a most delicious flavour, is most wholesome and nutritious, and is 'ideal' for every cooking and table purpose.

IDEAL MILK

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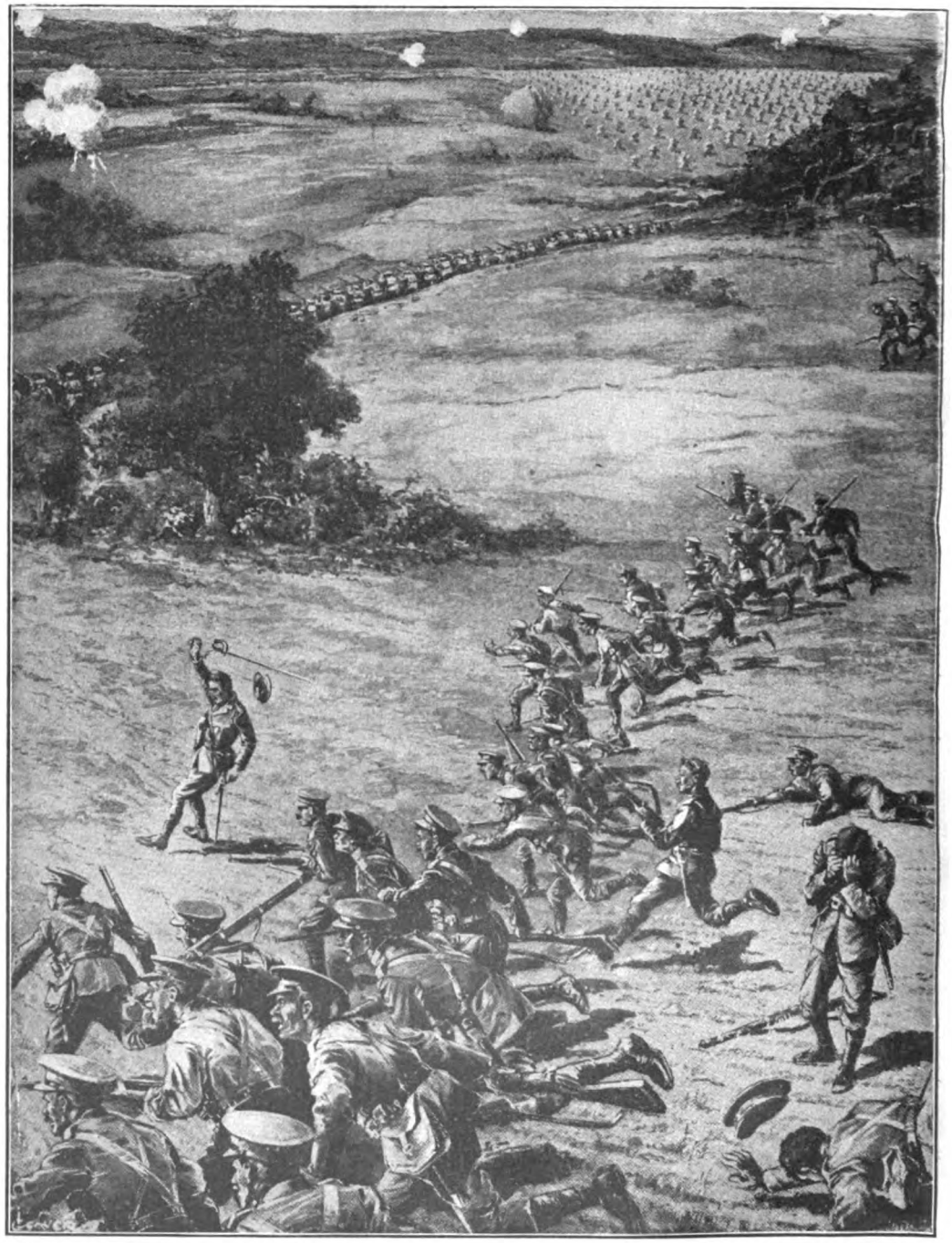
GUARANTEED ABSOLUTELY PURE.
FREE FROM PRESERVATIVES.—NO SUGAR.

Sold by all Grocers and Stores.
Cash price **4d.** *and* **7½d.** *per tin.*

As supplied to the Navy and Army.



THE 1ST WEST YORKSHIRES TAKING PART IN A COUNTER-ATTACK AT THE BATTLE OF THE AISNE.

"THE ADVANCE WAS OVER HALF A MILE OF GROUND, MOST OF WHICH WAS CLEAR OF ANY SORT OF COVER, BUT IT WAS MAGNIFICENTLY CARRIED OUT AND IRRESISTIBLE IN ITS IMPETUS."

(*See page* 112.)

The BRITISH CAMPAIGN IN FRANCE

THE FACTS AT LAST!

The Inside Story of the War

By A CONAN DOYLE

CHAPTER IV.—*(Continued.)*

THE BATTLE OF THE AISNE.

The Sixth Division—Hardships of the Army—German Breach of Faith—"Tâtez Toujours" The General Position—Attack Upon the West Yorks—Counter-Attack by Congreve's Eighteenth Brigade—Rheims Cathedral—Spies—The Siege and Fall of Antwerp—Parma and William.

THE next day, September 15th, was spent for the most part in making good the position gained and deepening the trenches to get some protection from the ever-growing artillery fire, which was the more intense as the great siege guns from Maubeuge were upon this day, for the first time, brought into action. At first the terrific explosions of these shells, the largest by far which had ever been brought into an actual line of battle, were exceedingly alarming, but after a time it became realized that, however omnipotent they might be against iron or concrete, they were comparatively harmless in soft soil, where their enormous excavations were soon used as convenient ready-made rifle-pits by the soldiers. This heavy fire led to a deepening of the trenches, which necessitated a general levy of picks and shovels from the country round, for a large portion of such equipment had been lost in the first week of the campaign.

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THE SIXTH DIVISION.

Only two active movements were made in the course of the day, one being that Hamilton's Third Division advanced once more towards Aizy and established itself a mile or more to the north in a better tactical position. The Seventh Brigade suffered considerable casualties in this change, including Colonel Hasted, of the 1st Wilts. The other was that Ferguson's Fifth Division fell back from Chivres, where it was exposed to a cross fire, and made its lines along the river bank, whence the Germans were never able to drive it, although they were only four hundred yards away in a position which was high above it. For the rest, it was a day of navvy's toil, though the men worked alternately with rifle and with pick, for there were continual German advances which withered away before the volleys which greeted them. By the 16th the position was fairly secure, and on the same day a welcome reinforcement arrived in the shape of the Sixth Division, forming the missing half of Pulteney's Third Corps.

Its composition is here appended :—

DIVISION VI.—Gen. Keir.

16th Infantry Brigade—Gen. Ing. Williams.

1st East Kent.
1st Leicester.
1st Shropshire Light Infantry.
2nd York and Lancaster.

17th Infantry Brigade—Gen. Walter Doran.

1st Royal Fusiliers.
1st N. Stafford.
2nd Lancasters.
3rd Rifle Brigade.

18th Infantry Brigade—Gen. Congreve.

1st W. York.
1st E. York.
2nd Notts and Derby (Sherwood Foresters).
2nd Durham Light Infantry.

Artillery.

II. Brig.	**21, 42, 53.**
XII.	**„ 43, 86, 87.**
XXIV.	**„ 110, 111, 112.**
XXXVIII.	**„ 24, 34, 72.**
	R.G.A. 24.

HARDSHIPS OF THE ARMY.

This division was kept in reserve upon the south side of the river. The French Commander-in-Chief had intimated that he intended to throw in reinforcements upon the left of the Sixth French Army, and so, as he hoped, to turn the German right. It was determined, therefore, that there should be no attempt at a British advance, but that the Allies should be content with holding the enemy to his positions. The two armies lay facing each other, therefore, at an average distance of about five hundred yards. The pressure was still most severe upon the Second Brigade on the extreme right. Bulfin's orders were to hold on at all costs, as he was the pivot of the whole line. He and his men responded nobly to the responsibility, although both they and their neighbours of Maxse's First Brigade had sustained a loss of over a thousand men each upon the 14th—twenty-five per cent. of their number. The shell-fire was incessant and from several converging directions. German infantry attacks were constant by night and by day, and the undrained trenches were deep in water. The men lay without overcoats and drenched to the skin, for the rain was incessant. Yet the sixth day found them on the exact ground upon which they had thrown their weary bodies after their attack. Nations desire from time to time to be reassured as to their own virility. Neither in endurance nor in courage have the British departed from the traditions of their ancestors. The unending strain of the trenches reached the limits of human resistance. But the line was always held.

On September 16th occurred an incident which may be taken as typical of the difference in the spirit with which the British and the Germans make war. Close to the lines of the Guards a barn which contained fifty wounded Germans was ignited by the enemy's shells. Under a terrific fire a rescue party rushed forward and got the unfortunate men to a place of safety. Many of the British lost their lives in this exploit, including Dr. Huggan, the Scottish International footballer. The Germans mock at our respect for sport, and yet this is the type of man that sport breeds, and it is the want of them in their own ranks which will stand for ever between us.

September 17th was a day of incessant attacks upon the right of the line, continually repulsed and yet continually renewed. One can well sympathize with the feelings of the German commanders who, looking down from their heights, saw the British line in a most dangerous strategical position, overmatched by their artillery, and with a deep river in their rear, and yet were unable to take advantage of it because of their failure to carry the one shallow line of extemporized trenches. Naturally, they came again and again, by night and by day, with admirable perseverance and daring to the attack, but were always

forced to admit that nothing can be done against the magazine rifle in hands which know how to use it. They tried here and they tried there, these constant sudden outpourings of cheering, hurrying, grey-clad men. They were natural tactics, but expensive ones, for every new attack left a fresh fringe of stricken men in front of the British lines.

GERMAN BREACH OF FAITH.

One incident upon the 17th stands out amid the somewhat monotonous record of trench attacks. On the extreme right of the British line a company of the 1st Northamptons occupied a most exposed position on the edge of the Chemin-des-dames. The men in a German trench which was some hundreds of yards in front hoisted a white flag and then advanced upon the British lines. It is well to be charitable in all these white flag incidents, since it is always possible on either side that unauthorized men may hoist it and the officer in command very properly refuse to recognize it; but in this case the deception appears to have been a deliberate one. These are the facts. On seeing the flag, Captain Savage, of B Company Northamptons, got out of the trench and with Lieutenant Dimmer, of the Rifles, advanced to the Germans. He threw down his sword and revolver to show that he was unarmed. He found a difficulty in getting a direct answer from the Germans, so he saluted their officer (who returned his salute), and turned back to walk to his own trench. Dimmer, looking back, saw the Germans level their rifles, so he threw himself down, crying out, "For God's sake, get down!" Captain Savage stood erect and was riddled with bullets. Many of the Northamptons, including Lieutenant Gordon, were shot down by the same volley. The Germans then attempted an advance, which was stopped by the machine-guns of the 1st Queen's Surrey. Such deplorable actions must always destroy all the amenities of civilized warfare.

On the afternoon of the same day, September 17th, a more serious attack was made upon the right flank of the advanced British position, the enemy re-occupying a line of trenches from which they had previously been driven. It was a dismal day of wind, rain, and mist, but the latter was not wholly an evil, as it enabled that hard-worked regiment, the 1st Northamptons, under their colonel, Osborne Smith, to move swiftly forward and, with the help of the 1st Queen's West Surrey, carry the place at the bayonet point. Half the Germans in the trench were put out of action, thirty-eight taken, and the rest fled. Pushing on after their success, they found the ridge beyond held by a considerable force of German infantry. The 2nd King's Rifles had come into the fight, and a dismounted squadron of the composite cavalry regiment put in some good work upon the flank. The action was continued briskly until dark, when both sides retained their ground with the exception of the captured line of trenches, which remained with the British. Seven officers and about two hundred men were killed or wounded in this little affair.

"TÂTEZ TOUJOURS."

The 18th found the enemy still acting upon the Napoleonic advice of "*Tâtez toujours*." All day they were feeling for that weak place which could never be found. The constant attempts were carried on into the night with the same monotonous record of advance leading to repulse. At one time it was the line of the 1st Queen's Surrey—and no line in the Army would be less likely to give results. Then it was the left flank of the First Division, and then the front of the Second.

Now and again there were swift counters from the British, in one of which an enemy's trench was taken by the 1st Gloucesters with the two machine-guns therein. But there was no inducement for any general British advance. "We have nothing to lose by staying here," said a general, "whereas every day is of importance to the Germans, so the longer we can detain them here the better." So it seemed from the point of view of the Allies. There is a German point of view also, however, which is worthy of consideration. They were aware, and others were not, that great reserves of men were left in the Fatherland, even as there were in France and in Britain, but that, unlike France and Britain, they actually had the arms and equipment for them, so that a second host could rapidly be called into the field. If these legions were in Belgium, they could ensure the fall of Antwerp, overrun the country, and seize the sea-board. All this could be effected while the Allies were held at the Aisne. Later, with these vast reinforcements, the German armies might burst the barrier which held them and make a second descent upon Paris, which was still less than fifty miles away. So the Germans may have argued, and the history of the future was to show that there were some grounds for such a calculation. It was in truth a second war in which once

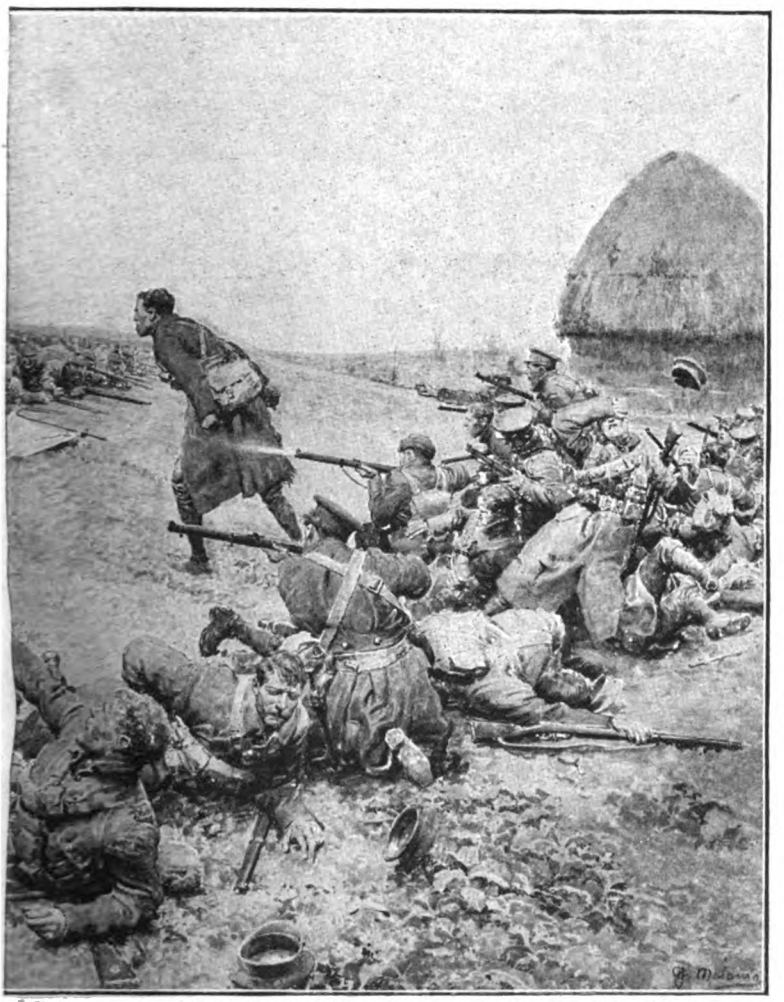
again the Germans had the men and material ready, while the Allies had not.

THE GENERAL POSITION.

This date, September 18th, may be taken as the conclusion of the actual Battle of the Aisne, since from that time the operations defined themselves definitely as a mutual siege and gigantic artillery duel. The casualties of the British at the Aisne amounted, up to that date, to ten thousand officers and men, the great majority of which were suffered by Haig's First Army Corps. The action had lasted from the 13th, and its outstanding features, so far as our forces were concerned, may be said to have been the remarkable feat of crossing the river and the fine leadership of General Haig in the dangerous position in which he found himself. It has been suggested that the single unbroken bridge by which he crossed may have been a trap purposely laid by the Germans, whose plans miscarried owing to the simultaneous forcing of the river at many other points. This seems to be contradicted by the fact that the charges for destroying the bridge were actually in position, though, of course, that also may have been part of the deception. As it was, the position of the First Corps was a very difficult one, and a reverse might have become an absolute disaster. It was impossible for General French to avoid this risk, for since the weather precluded all air reconnaissance, it was only by pushing his Army across that he could be sure of the enemy's dispositions. The net result was one more demonstration upon both sides that the defensive force has so great an advantage under modern conditions that if there be moderate equality of numbers, and if the flanks of each be guarded, a condition of stalemate will invariably ensue, until the campaign is decided by economic causes or by military movements in some other part of the field of operations.

GERMAN BREACH OF FAITH: THE ABUSE OF THE WHITE FLAG BY WHICH THE 1st NORTHAMPTONS WERE CUT DOWN.
"SUCH DEPLORABLE ACTIONS MUST ALWAYS DESTROY

There is ample evidence that for the time the German army, though able with no great effort to hold the extraordinarily strong position which had been prepared for it, was actually in very bad condition. Large new drafts had been brought out, which had not yet been assimilated by the army. The resistance of Maubeuge had blocked one of their supply railroads, and for some time the

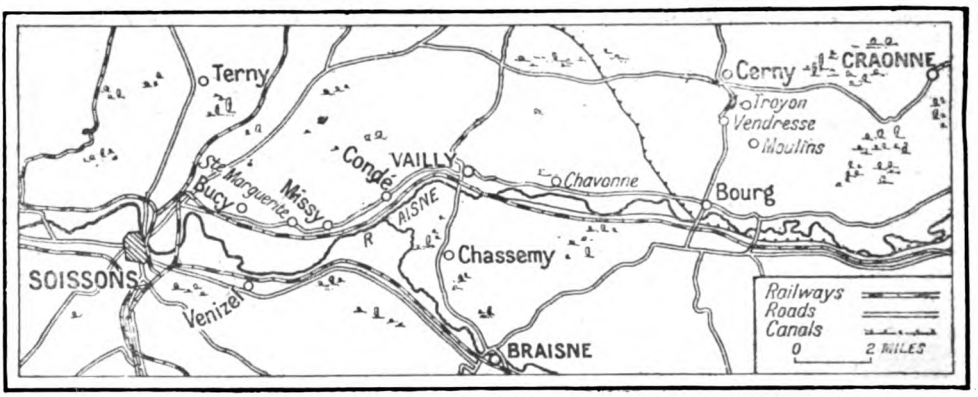


FLAG. AN INCIDENT SHOWING HOW A COMPANY OF THE DOWN THROUGH GERMAN TREACHERY. ALL THE AMENITIES OF CIVILIZED WARFARE."

commissariat had partially broken down. Above all, they were mentally depressed by meeting such resistance where they had been led to expect an easy victory, by their forced retreat when almost within sight of Paris, and by their losses, which had been enormous. In spite of their own great superiority in heavy guns, the French light field-pieces had controlled the battlefields. There is ample evidence in the letters which have been intercepted, apart from the statements and appearance of the prisoners, to show the want and depression which prevailed. This period, however, may be said to mark the nadir of the German fortunes in this year. The fall of Maubeuge improved their supplies of every sort, their reserves and Landwehr got broken in by the war of the trenches, and the eventual fall of Antwerp and invasion of Western Belgium gave them that moral stimulus which they badly needed.

Some wit amongst the officers has described the war as "months of boredom broken by moments of agony." It is the duty of the chronicler to describe, even if he attempts to alleviate, the former, for the most monotonous procession of events form integral parts of the great whole. The perusal of a great number of diaries and experiences leaves a vague and disconnected recollection behind it of personal escapes, of the terror of high explosives, of the excellence of the rear services of the Army, of futile shellings, with an occasional tragic mishap, where some group of men far from the front were suddenly, by some freak of fate, blown to destruction, of the discomforts of wet trenches and the joys of an occasional relief in the villages at the rear. Here and there, however, in the monotony of what had now become a mutual siege, there stand out some episodes or developments of a more vital character, which will be recorded in their sequence.

It may be conjectured that, up to the period of the definite entrenchment of the two armies, the losses of the enemy were not greater than our own. It is in the attack that losses are incurred, and the attack had, for the most part, been with us. The heavier guns of the Germans had also been a factor in their favour. From the 18th onwards, however, the weekly losses of the enemy must have been very much greater than ours, since continually, night and day, they made



THE SCENE OF THE FIGHTING DESCRIBED IN THE PRESENT CHAPTER.

onslaughts, which attained some partial and temporary success upon the 20th, but which on every other occasion were blown back by the rifle-fire with which they were met. So mechanical and half-hearted did they at last become that they gave the impression that those who made them had no hope of success, and that they were only done at the bidding of some imperious or imperial voice from the distance. In these attacks, though any one of them may have only furnished a few hundred casualties, the total effect spread over a month must have equalled that of a very great battle, and amounted, since no progress was ever made, to a considerable defeat.

Thus on September 19th there was a succession of attacks, made with considerable vivacity and proportional loss. About 4 p.m. one developed in front of the Fourth and Sixth Brigades of the First Corps, but was speedily stopped. An hour later another one burst forth upon the Seventh and Ninth Brigades of the Second Corps, with the same result. The artillery fire was very severe all day and the broad valley was arched from dawn to dusk by the flying shell. The weather was still detestable, and a good many were reported ill from the effects of constant wet and cold.

The 20th was the date of two separate attacks, one of which involved some hard fighting and considerable loss. The first, at eight in the morning, was upon Shaw's Ninth Brigade and was driven off without great difficulty. The second was the more serious and demands some fuller detail.

ATTACK UPON THE WEST YORKS.

On the arrival of the Sixth Division upon the 18th, Sir John French had determined to hold them in reserve and to use them to relieve, in turn, each of the brigades which had been so hard-worked during the previous week. Of these, there was none which needed and deserved a rest more than Bulfin's Second Brigade, which, after their attack upon the Chemin-des-dames upon the 14th, had made and held the trenches which formed both the extreme right and the advanced point of the British line. For nearly a week these men of iron had lain where the battle had left them. With the object of relieving them, the Eighteenth Brigade (Congreve's) of the Sixth Division was ordered to take their places. The transfer was successfully effected at night, but the new-comers, who had only arrived two days before from England, found themselves engaged at once in a very serious action. It may have been coincidence, or it may have been that with their remarkable system of espionage the Germans learned that new troops had taken the place of those whose mettle they had tested so often; but however this may be, they made a vigorous advance upon the afternoon of September 20th, coming on so rapidly and in such numbers that they drove out the occupants both of the front British trenches—which were manned by three companies of the 1st West Yorkshires—and the adjoining French trench upon the right, which was held by the Turcos. The West Yorkshires were overwhelmed and enfiladed with machine-guns, a number were shot down, and others were taken prisoners.

COUNTER-ATTACK BY CONGREVE'S EIGHTEENTH BRIGADE.

Fortunately, the rest of the brigade were in immediate support, and orders were given by General Congreve to advance and to regain the ground that had been lost. The rush up the hill was carried out by the 2nd Notts

and Derby Regiment (Sherwood Foresters) in the centre, with the remainder of the West Yorks upon their right, and the 2nd Durham Light Infantry upon their left. They were supported by the 1st East Yorks and by the 2nd Sussex Regiment, which had just been called out of the line for a rest. The 4th Irish Dragoon Guards at a gallop at first, and then dismounting with rifle and bayonet, were in the forefront of the fray. The advance was over half a mile of ground, most of which was clear of any sort of cover, but it was magnificently carried out and irresistible in its impetus. All the regiments lost heavily, but all reached their goal. Officers were hit again and again, but staggered on with their men. Captain Popham, of the Sherwood Foresters, is said to have carried six wounds with him up the slope. Fifteen officers and two hundred and fifty men were shot down, but the lost trench was carried at the point of the bayonet and the whole position re-established. The total casualties were thirteen hundred and sixty-four, more than half of which fell upon the West Yorkshires, while the majority of the others were Sherwood Foresters, East Yorkshires, and Durhams. Major Robb, of the latter regiment, was among those who fell. The Germans did not hold the trenches for an hour, and yet the engagement may be counted as a success for them, since our losses were certainly heavier than theirs. There was no gain, however, in ground. The action was more than a mere local attack, and the British line was in danger of being broken had it not been for the determined counter-attack of the Eighteenth Brigade. To the north of this main attack there was another subsidiary movement on the Beaulne ridge, in which the Fifth and Sixth Brigades were sharply engaged. The 1st King's, the 2nd H.L.I., and the 2nd Worcesters all sustained some losses.

About this period, both the British and the French armies began to strengthen themselves with those heavy guns in which they had been so completely overweighted by their enemy. On the 20th the French in the neighbourhood of our lines received twelve long-range cannon, firing a thirty-five-pound shell a distance of twelve kilometres. Three days later the British opened fire with four new batteries of six-inch howitzers. From this time onwards there was no such great disparity in the heavy artillery, and the wounded from the monster shells of the enemy had at least the slight solace that their fate was not unavenged. The expenditure of shells, however, was still at the rate of ten German to one of the Allies. If the war was not won it was no fault of Krupp and the men of Essen. In two weeks the British lost nearly three thousand men from shell-fire.

RHEIMS CATHEDRAL.

It was at this time, September 20th, that the Germans put a climax upon the long series of outrages and vandalisms of which their troops had been guilty by the deliberate bombardment of Rheims Cathedral, the Westminster Abbey of France. The act seems to have sprung from deliberate malice, for though it was asserted afterwards that the tower had been used as an artillery observation point, this is in the highest degree improbable, since the summit of the ridge upon the French side is available for such a purpose. The cathedral was occupied at the time by a number of German wounded, who were the sufferers by the barbarity of their fellow-countrymen. The incident will always remain as a permanent record of the value of that Kultur over which we have heard such frantic boasts. The records of the French, Belgian, and British Commissions upon the German atrocities, reinforced by the recollection of the burned University of Louvain and the shattered Cathedral of Rheims, will leave a stain upon the German armies of 1914-1915 which can never be erased. Their conduct is the more remarkable since the invasion of 1870 was conducted with a stern but rigid discipline which won the acknowledgment of the world. In spite of all the material progress and the superficial show of refinement, little more than a generation seems to have separated civilization from primitive barbarity, which attained such a pitch that no arrangement could be made by which the wounded between the lines could be brought in. Such was the code of a nominally Christian nation in the year 1914.

Up to now the heavier end of the fighting had been borne by Haig's First Corps, but from the 20th onwards the Second and Third sustained the impact. The action just described, in which the West Yorkshires suffered so severely, was fought mainly by the Eighteenth Brigade of Pulteney's Third Corps. On the 21st it was the turn of the Second Corps. During the night the 1st Wiltshire Regiment of McCracken's Seventh Brigade was attacked, and making a strong counter-attack in the morning they cleared a wood with the bayonet, and advanced the British line at that point. A subsequent attack upon the same brigade was repulsed. How heavy the

IN THE GERMAN TRENCHES ON THE AISNE DURING A NIGHT ENGAGEMENT.
From a drawing made on the spot by a German artist.

losses had been in the wear and tear of six days' continual trench work is shown by the fact that when on this date the Ninth Brigade (Shaw's) was taken back for a rest it had lost thirty officers and eight hundred and sixty men, or nearly twenty-five per cent. of its total number, since crossing the Aisne.

The German heavy guns upon the 21st set fire to the village of Missy, driving out the 1st East Surreys who held it. They still continued, however, to hold on to the trenches on the river bank, though they, in common with the rest of Ferguson's Division, were dominated night and day by a plunging fire from above. It is worth recording that in spite of the strain, the hardship, and the wet trenches, the percentage of serious sickness among the troops was lower than the normal rate of a garrison town. A few cases of enteric appeared about this time, of which six were in one company of the Coldstream Guards. It is instructive to note that in each case the man belonged to the uninoculated minority.

SPIES.

A plague of spies infested the British and French lines at this period, and their elaborate telephone installations, leading from haystacks or from cellars, showed the foresight of the enemy. Some of these were German officers, who bravely took their lives in their hands from the patriotic motive of helping their country. Others, alas! were residents who had sold their souls for German gold. One such—a farmer—was found with a telephone within his house and no less a sum than a thousand pounds in specie. Many a battery concealed in a hollow, and many a convoy in a hidden road, were amazed by the accuracy of a fire which was really directed, not from the distant guns, but from some wayside hiding-place. Fifteen of these men were shot and the trouble abated.

The attacks upon the British trenches, which had died down for several days, were renewed with considerable vigour upon September 26th. The first, directed against the 1st Queen's Surrey, was carried out by a force of about one thousand men, who advanced in close order, and, coming under machine-gun fire, were rapidly broken up. The second was made by a German battalion debouching from the woods in front of the 1st South Wales Borderers. This attack penetrated the line at one point, the left company of the regiment suffering severely, with all its officers down. The reserve company, with the help of the 2nd Welsh Regiment, retook the trenches after a hot fight, which ended by the wood being cleared. The Germans lost heavily in this struggle, eighty of them being picked up on the very edge of the trench. The Borderers

also had numerous casualties, which totalled up to seven officers and one hundred and eighty-two men, half of whom were actually killed.

The Army was now in a very strong position, for the trenches were so well constructed that unless a shell by some miracle went right in, no harm would result. The weather had become fine once more, and the flying service relieved the anxieties of the commanders as to a massed attack. The heavy artillery of the Allies was also improving from day to day, especially the heavy British howitzers, aided by aëroplane observers with a wireless installation.

At this period the enemy seems to have realized that his attacks, whether against the British line or against the French armies which flanked it, and which had fought throughout with equal tenacity, were a mere waste of life. The assaults died away or became mere demonstrations. Early in October the total losses of the Army upon the Aisne had been five hundred and sixty-one officers and twelve thousand nine hundred and eighty men, a proportion which speaks well for the coolness and accuracy of the enemy's sharp-shooters, while it exhibits our own forgetfulness of the lessons of the African War, where we learned that the officer should be clad and armed so like the men as to be indistinguishable even at short ranges. Of this large total the Second Corps lost one hundred and thirty-six officers and three thousand and ninety-five men, and the First Corps three hundred and forty-eight officers and six thousand and seventy-three men, the remaining seventy-seven officers and three thousand eight hundred and twelve men being from the Third Corps and the cavalry.

THE SIEGE AND FALL OF ANTWERP.

It was at this period that a great change came over both the object and the locality of the operations. This change depended upon two events which had occurred far to the north, and re-acted upon the great armies locked in the long grapple of the Aisne. The first of these controlling circumstances was that, by the movement of the old troops and the addition of new ones, each army had sought to turn the flank of the other in the north, until the whole centre of gravity of the war was transferred to that region. A new French army under General Castelnau, whose fine defence of Nancy had put him in the front of French leaders, had appeared on the extreme left wing of the Allies, only to be countered by fresh bodies of Germans, until the ever-extending line lengthened out to the manufacturing districts of Lens and Lisle, where amid pit-shafts and slag-heaps the cavalry of the French and the Germans tried desperately to get round each other's flanks. The other factor was the fall of Antwerp, which had released very large bodies of Germans, who were flooding over Western Belgium, and, with the help of great new levies from Germany, carrying the war to the sand-dunes of the coast. The operations which brought about this great change open up a new chapter in the history of the war. The actual events which culminated in the fall of Antwerp may be very briefly handled, since, important as they were, they were not primarily part of the British task, and hence hardly come within the scope of this narrative.

PARMA AND WILLIAM.

The Belgians, after the evacuation of Brussels in August, had withdrawn their army into the widespread fortress of Antwerp, from which they made frequent sallies upon the Germans who were garrisoning their country. Great activity was shown and several small successes were gained, which had the useful effect of detaining two corps which might have been employed upon the Aisne. Eventually, towards the end of September, the Germans turned their attention seriously to the reduction of the city, with a well-founded confidence that no modern forts could resist the impact of their enormous artillery. They drove the garrison within the lines, and early in October opened a bombardment upon the outer forts with such results that it was evidently only a matter of days before they would fall and the fine old city be faced with the alternative of surrender or destruction. The Spanish fury of Parma's pikemen would be a small thing compared to the *furor Teutonicus* working its evil deliberate will upon town-hall or cathedral, with the aid of fire-disc, petrol-spray, or other products of culture. The main problem before the Allies, if the town could not be saved, was to ensure that the Belgian army should be extricated and that nothing of military value which could be destroyed should be left to the invaders. No troops were available for a rescue, for the French and British old formations were already engaged, while the new ones were not yet ready for action. In these circumstances, a resolution was come to by the British leaders which was bold to the verge of rashness and

so chivalrous as to be almost quixotic. It was determined to send out at the shortest notice a naval division, one brigade of which consisted of marines, troops who are second to none in the country's service, while the other two brigades were young amateur sailor volunteers, most of whom had only been under arms for a few weeks. It was an extraordinary experiment, as testing how far the average sport-loving, healthy-minded young Briton needs only his equipment to turn him into a soldier who, in spite of all rawness and inefficiency, can still affect the course of a campaign. This strange force, one-third veterans and two-thirds practically civilians, was hurried across to do what it could for the failing town, and to demonstrate to Belgium how real was the sympathy which prompted us to send all that we had. A reinforcement of a very different quality was dispatched a few days later in the shape of the Seventh Division of the Regular Army, with the Third Division of Cavalry. These fine troops were too late, however, to save the city, and soon found themselves in a position where it needed all their hardihood to save themselves.

The Marine Brigade of the Naval Division under General Paris was dispatched from England in the early morning and reached Antwerp during the night of October 3rd. They were about two thousand in number. Early next morning they were out in the trenches, relieving some weary Belgians. The Germans were already within the outer enceinte and drawing close to the inner. For forty-eight hours they held the line in the face of heavy shelling. The cover was good and the losses were not heavy. At the end of that time the Belgian troops, who had been a good deal worn by their heroic exertions, were unable to sustain the German pressure, and evacuated the trenches on the flank of the British line. The brigade then fell back to a reserve position in front of the town.

On the night of the 5th the two other brigades of the division, numbering some five thousand amateur sailors, arrived in Antwerp, and the whole force assembled on the new line of defence. The bombardment was now very heavy, and the town was on fire in several places. The equipment of the British left much to be desired, and their trenches were as indifferent as their training. None the less they played the man and lived up to the traditions of that great service upon whose threshold they stood. For three days these men, who a few weeks before had been anything from schoolmasters to tram-conductors, held their perilous post. They were very raw, but they possessed a great asset in their officers, who were usually men of long service. But neither the lads of the naval brigades nor the war-worn and much-enduring Belgians could stop the mouths of those inexorable guns. On the 8th it was clear that the forts could no longer be held. The British task had been to maintain the trenches which connected the forts with each other, but if the forts went it was clear that the trenches must be outflanked and untenable. The situation, therefore, was hopeless, and all that remained was to save the garrison and leave as little as possible for the victors. Some thirty or forty German merchant ships in the harbour were sunk and the great petrol tanks were set on fire. By the light of the flames the Belgian and British forces made their way successfully out of the town, and the glorious service rendered later by our Allies upon the Yser and elsewhere is the best justification of the policy which made us strain every nerve in order to do everything which could have a moral or material effect upon them in their darkest hour. Had our own force been able to get away unscathed, the whole operation might have been reviewed with equanimity if not with satisfaction, but, unhappily, a grave misfortune, arising rather from bad luck than from the opposition of the enemy, came upon the retreating brigades, so that very many of our young sailors after their one week of crowded life came to the end of their active service for the war.

On leaving Antwerp it had been necessary to strike to the north in order to avoid a large detachment of the enemy who were said to be upon the line of the retreat. The boundary between Holland and Belgium is at this point very intricate, with no clear line of demarcation, and a long column of British somnambulists, staggering along in the dark after so many days in which they had for the most part never enjoyed two consecutive hours of sleep, wandered over the fatal line and found themselves in firm but kindly Dutch custody for the rest of the war. Some fell into the hands of the enemy, but the great majority were interned. These men belonged chiefly to three battalions of the First Brigade. The Second Brigade, with one battalion of the First, and the greater part of the Marines, made their way to the trains at St. Gilles-Waes, and were able to reach Ostend in safety. The remaining battalion of Marines, with a

ANTWERP IN FLAMES DURING THE BOMBARDMENT BY THE GERMANS.
THIS DRAWING, WHICH WAS MADE FROM A SKETCH BY MR. H C SEPPINGS WRIGHT, WHO WAS IN ANTWERP DURING THE BOMBARDMENT, GIVES A VIVID IDEA OF THE LURID SCENE BY NIGHT IN THE STRICKEN CITY.

number of stragglers of the other brigades, were cut off at Morbede by the Germans, and about half of them were taken, while the rest fought their way through in the darkness and joined their comrades. The total losses of the British in the whole misadventure from first to last were about two thousand five hundred men—a high price, and yet not too high when weighed against the results of their presence at Antwerp. On October 10th the Germans under General Von Beseler occupied the city. Mr. Powell, who was present, testifies that sixty thousand marched into the town, and that they were all troops of the active army.

It has already been described how the northern ends of the two contending armies were endeavouring to outflank each other, and there seemed every possibility that this process would be carried out until each arrived at the coast. Early in October Sir John French represented to General Joffre that it would be well that the British Army should be withdrawn from the Aisne and take its position to the left of the French forces, a move which would shorten its line of communications very materially, and at the same time give it the task of defending the Channel coast. General Joffre agreed to the proposition, and the necessary steps were at once taken to put it into force. The Belgians had in the meanwhile made their way behind the line of the Yser, where a formidable position had been prepared. There, with hardly a day of rest, they were ready to renew the struggle with the ferocious ravagers of their country. The Belgian Government had been moved to France, and their splendid King, who will live in history as the most heroic and chivalrous figure of the war, continued by his brave words and noble example to animate the spirits of his countrymen.

(*To be continued.*)

The Aunt and the Sluggard.

By P. G. WODEHOUSE.

Illustrated by Alfred Leete.

NOW that it's all over, I may as well admit that there was a time during the rather rummy affair of Rockmetteller Todd when I thought that Jeeves was going to let me down. The man had the appearance of being baffled.

Jeeves is my man, you know. Officially he pulls in his weekly wage for pressing my clothes, and all that sort of thing; but actually he's more like what the poet Johnnie called some bird of his acquaintance who was apt to rally round him in times of need—a guide, don't you know; philosopher, if I remember rightly, and—I rather fancy—friend. I rely on him at every turn.

So naturally, when Rocky Todd told me about his aunt, I didn't hesitate. Jeeves was in on the thing from the start.

The affair of Rocky Todd broke loose early one morning in spring. I was in bed, restoring the good old tissues with about nine hours of the dreamless, when the door flew open and somebody prodded me in the lower ribs and began to shake the bedclothes. After blinking a bit and generally pulling myself together, I located Rocky, and my first impression was that it was some horrid dream.

Rocky, you see, lived down on Long Island somewhere, miles away from New York; and not only that, but he had told me himself more than once that he never got up before twelve, and seldom earlier than one. Constitutionally the laziest young devil in America, he had hit on a walk in life which enabled him to go the limit in that direction. He was a poet. At least, he wrote poems when he did anything; but most of his time, as far as I could make out, he spent in a sort of trance. He told me once that he could sit on a fence, watching a worm and wondering what on earth it was up to, for hours at a stretch.

He had his scheme of life worked out to a fine point. About once a month he would take three days writing a few poems; the other three hundred and twenty-nine days of the year he rested. I didn't know there was enough money in poetry to support a chappie, even in the way in which Rocky lived; but it seems that, if you stick to exhortations to young men to lead the strenuous life and don't shove in any rhymes, American editors fight for the stuff. Rocky showed me one of his things once. It began:—

Be!
Be!
The past is dead.
To-morrow is not born.
Be to-day!
To-day!
Be with every nerve,
With every muscle,
With every drop of your red blood!
Be!

It was printed opposite the frontispiece of a magazine with a sort of scroll round it, and a picture in the middle of a fairly nude chappie, with bulging muscles, giving the rising sun the glad eye. Rocky said they gave him a hundred dollars for it, and he stayed in bed till four in the afternoon for over a month.

As regarded the future he was pretty solid, owing to the fact that he had a moneyed aunt tucked away somewhere in Illinois; and, as he had been named Rockmetteller after her, and was her only nephew, his position was pretty sound. He told me that when he did come into the money he meant to do no work at all, except perhaps an occasional poem recommending the young man with life opening out before him, with all its splendid possibilities, to light a pipe and shove his feet upon the mantelpiece.

And this was the man who was prodding me in the ribs in the grey dawn!

"Read this, Bertie!" I could just see that he was waving a letter or something equally foul in my face. "Wake up and read this!"

I can't read before I've had my morning tea and a cigarette. I groped for the bell.

Jeeves came in, looking as fresh as a dewy violet. It's a mystery to me how he does it.

"Tea, Jeeves."

"Very good, sir."

He flowed silently out of the room—he always gives you the impression of being some liquid substance when he moves; and I found that Rocky was surging round with his beastly letter again.

"What is it?" I said. "What on earth's the matter?"

"Read it!"

"I can't. I haven't had my tea."

"READ THIS, BERTIE!"

"Well, listen then."

"Who's it from?"

"My aunt."

At this point I fell asleep again. I woke to hear him saying:—

"So what on earth am I to do?"

Jeeves trickled in with the tray, like some silent stream meandering over its mossy bed; and I saw daylight.

"Read it again, Rocky, old top," I said. "I want Jeeves to hear it. Mr. Todd's aunt has written him a rather rummy letter, Jeeves, and we want your advice."

"Very good, sir."

He stood in the middle of the room, registering devotion to the cause, and Rocky started again:—

"*My dear Rockmetteller,—I have been thinking things over for a long while, and I have come to the conclusion that I have been very thoughtless to wait so long before doing what I have made up my mind to do now.*"

"What do you make of that, Jeeves?"

"It seems a little obscure at present, sir, but no doubt it becomes clearer at a later point in the communication."

"It becomes as clear as mud!" said Rocky.

"Proceed, old scout," I said, champing my bread and butter.

"*You know how all my life I have longed to visit New York and see for myself the wonderful gay life of which I have read so much. I fear that now it will be impossible for me to fulfil my dream. I am old and worn out. I seem to have no strength left in me.*"

"Sad, Jeeves, what?"

"Extremely, sir."

"Sad nothing!" said Rocky. "It's sheer laziness. I went to see her last Christmas and she was bursting with health. Her doctor told me himself that there was nothing wrong with her whatever. But she will insist that she's a hopeless invalid, so he has to agree with her. She's got a fixed idea that the trip to New York would kill her; so, though it's been her ambition all her life to come here, she stays where she is."

"Rather like the chappie whose heart was 'in the Highlands a-chasing of the deer,' Jeeves?"

"The cases are in some respects parallel, sir."

"Carry on, Rocky, dear boy."

"*So I have decided that, if I cannot enjoy all the marvels of the city myself, I can at least enjoy them through you. I suddenly thought of this yesterday after reading a beautiful poem in the Sunday paper about a young man who had longed all his life for a certain thing and won it in the end only when he was too old to enjoy it. It was very sad, and it touched me.*"

"A thing," interpolated Rocky, bitterly, "that I've not been able to do in ten years."

"As you know, you will have my money when I am gone; but until now I have never been able to see my way to giving you an allowance. I have now decided to do so—on one condition. I have written to a firm of lawyers in New York, giving them instructions to pay you quite a substantial sum each month. My one condition is that you live in New York and enjoy yourself as I have always wished to do. I want you to be my representative, to spend this money for me as I should do myself. I want you to plunge into the gay, prismatic life of New York. I want you to be the life and soul of brilliant supper parties.

"Above all, I want you—indeed, I insist on this—to write me letters at least once a week, giving me a full description of all you are doing and all that is going on in the city, so that I may enjoy at secondhand what my wretched health prevents my enjoying for myself. Remember that I shall expect full details, and that no detail is too trivial to interest

"Your affectionate Aunt,

"Isabel Rockmetteller."

"What about it?" said Rocky.

"What about it?" I said.

"Yes. What on earth am I going to do?"

It was only then that I really got on to the extremely rummy attitude of the chappie, in view of the fact that a quite unexpected mess of the right stuff had suddenly descended on him from a blue sky. To my mind it was an occasion for the beaming smile and the joyous whoop; yet here the man was, looking and talking as if Fate had swung on his solar plexus. It amazed me.

"Aren't you bucked?" I said.

"Bucked!"

"If I were in your place I should be frightfully braced. I consider this pretty soft for you."

He gave a kind of yelp, stared at me for a moment, and then began to talk of New York in a way that reminded me of Jimmy Mundy, the reformer chappie. Jimmy had just come to New York on a hit-the-trail campaign, and I had popped in at the Garden a couple of days before, for half an hour or so, to hear him. He had certainly told New York some pretty straight things about itself, having apparently taken a dislike to the place, but, by Jove, you know, dear old Rocky made him look like a publicity agent for the old metrop!

"Pretty soft!" he cried. "To have to come and live in New York! To have to leave my little cottage and take a stuffy, smelly, overheated hole of an apartment in this Heaven-forsaken, festering Gehenna. To have to mix night after night with a mob who think that life is a sort of St. Vitus's dance, and imagine that they're having a good time because they're making enough noise for six and drinking too much for ten. I loathe New York, Bertie. I wouldn't come near the place if I hadn't got to see editors occasionally. There's a blight on it. It's got moral delirium tremens. It's the limit. The very thought of staying more than a day in it makes me sick. And you call this thing pretty soft for me!"

I felt rather like Lot's friends must have done when they dropped in for a quiet chat and their genial host began to criticize the Cities of the Plain. I had no idea old Rocky could be so eloquent.

"It would kill me to have to live in New York," he went on. "To have to share the air with six million people! To have to wear stiff collars and decent clothes all the time! To——" He started. "Good Lord! I suppose I should have to dress for dinner in the evenings. What a ghastly notion!"

I was shocked, absolutely shocked.

"My dear chap!" I said, reproachfully.

"Do you dress for dinner every night, Bertie?"

"Jeeves," I said, coldly. The man was still standing like a statue by the door. "How many suits of evening clothes have I?"

"We have three suits of full evening dress, sir; two dinner jackets——"

"Three."

"For practical purposes two only, sir. If you remember, we cannot wear the third. We have also seven white waistcoats."

"And shirts?"

"Four dozen, sir."

"And white ties?"

"The first two shallow shelves in the chest of drawers are completely filled with our white ties, sir."

I turned to Rocky.

"You see?"

The chappie writhed like an electric fan.

"I won't do it! I can't do it! I'll be hanged if I'll do it! How on earth can I dress up like that? Do you realize that most days I don't get out of my pyjamas till five in the afternoon, and then I just put on an old sweater?"

I saw Jeeves wince, poor chap! This sort of revelation shocked his finest feelings.

"Then, what are you going to do about it?" I said.

"That's what I want to know."

"You might write and explain to your aunt."

"I might—if I wanted her to get round to her lawyer's in two rapid leaps and cut me out of her will."

I saw his point.

"What do you suggest, Jeeves?" I said.

Jeeves cleared his throat respectfully.

"The crux of the matter would appear to be, sir, that Mr. Todd is obliged by the conditions under which the money is delivered into his possession to write Miss Rockmetteller long and detailed letters relating to his movements, and the only method by which this can be accomplished, if Mr. Todd adheres to his expressed intention of remaining in the country, is for Mr. Todd to induce some second party to gather the actual experiences which Miss Rockmetteller wishes reported to her, and to convey these to him in the shape of a careful report, on which it would be possible for him, with the aid of his imagination, to base the suggested correspondence."

Having got which off the old diaphragm, Jeeves was silent. Rocky looked at me in a helpless sort of way. He hasn't been brought up on Jeeves as I have, and he isn't on to his curves.

"Could he put it a little clearer, Bertie?" he said. "I thought at the start it was going to make sense, but it kind of flickered. What's the idea?"

"My dear old man, perfectly simple. I knew we could stand on Jeeves. All you've got to do is to get somebody to go round the town for you and take a few notes, and then you work the notes up into letters. That's it, isn't it, Jeeves?"

"Precisely, sir."

The light of hope gleamed in Rocky's eyes. He looked at Jeeves in a startled way, dazed by the man's vast intellect.

"But who would do it?" he said. "It would have to be a pretty smart sort of man, a man who would notice things."

"Jeeves!" I said. "Let Jeeves do it."

"But would he?"

"You would do it, wouldn't you, Jeeves?"

For the first time in our long connection I observed Jeeves almost smile. The corner of his mouth curved quite a quarter of an inch, and for a moment his eye ceased to look like a meditative fish's.

"I should be delighted to oblige, sir. As a matter of fact, I have already visited some of New York's places of interest on my evening out, and it would be most enjoyable to make a practice of the pursuit."

"Fine! I know exactly what your aunt wants to hear about, Rocky. She wants an earful of cabaret stuff. The place you ought to go to first, Jeeves, is Reigelheimer's. It's on Forty-second Street. Anybody will show you the way."

Jeeves shook his head.

"Pardon me, sir. People are no longer going to Reigelheimer's. The place at the moment is Frolics on the Roof."

"You see?" I said to Rocky. "Leave it to Jeeves. He knows."

It isn't often that you find an entire group of your fellow-humans happy in this world; but our little circle was certainly an example of the fact that it can be done. We were all full of beans. Everything went absolutely right from the start.

Jeeves was happy, partly because he loves to exercise his giant brain, and partly because he was having a corking time among the bright lights. I saw him one night at the Midnight Revels. He was sitting at a table on the edge of the dancing floor, doing himself remarkably well with a fat cigar and a bottle of the best. I'd never imagined he could look so nearly human. His face wore an expression of austere benevolence, and he was making notes in a small book.

As for the rest of us, I was feeling pretty good, because I was fond of old Rocky and glad to be able to do him a good turn. Rocky was perfectly contented, because he was still able to sit on fences in his pyjamas and watch worms. And, as for the aunt, she seemed tickled to death. She was getting Broadway at pretty long range, but it seemed to be hitting her just right. I read one of her letters to Rocky, and it was full of life.

But then Rocky's letters, based on Jeeves's notes, were enough to buck anybody up. It was rummy when you came to think of it. There was I, loving the life, while the mere mention of it gave Rocky a tired feeling; yet here is a letter I wrote home to a pal of mine in London:—

"*Dear Freddie,—Well, here I am in New York. It's not a bad place. I'm not having a bad time. Everything's pretty all right. The cabarets aren't bad. Don't know when I shall be back. How's everybody? Cheer-o!—Yours, Bertie.*

"*P.S.—Seen old Ted lately?*"

Not that I cared about old Ted; but if I hadn't dragged him in I couldn't have got the confounded thing on to the second page.

Now here's old Rocky on exactly the same subject:—

"*Dearest Aunt Isabel,—How can I ever thank you enough for giving me the opportunity*

"HE WAS SITTING AT A TABLE ON THE EDGE OF THE DANCING FLOOR, DOING HIMSELF REMARKABLY WELL."

to live in this astounding city? New York seems more wonderful every day.

"*Fifth Avenue is at its best, of course, just now. The dresses are magnificent!*"

Wads of stuff about the dresses. I didn't know Jeeves was such an authority.

"*I was out with some of the crowd at the Midnight Revels the other night. We took in a show first, after a little dinner at a new place on Forty-third Street. We were quite a gay party. Georgie Cohan looked in about midnight and got off a good one about Willie Collier. Fred Stone could only stay a minute, but Doug. Fairbanks did all sorts of stunts and made us roar. Diamond Jim Brady was there, as usual, and Laurette Taylor showed up with a party. The show at the Revels is quite good. I am enclosing a programme.*

"*Last night a few of us went round to Frolics on the Roof——*"

And so on and so forth, yards of it. I suppose it's the artistic temperament or something. What I mean is, it's easier for a chappie who's used to writing poems and that sort of tosh to put a bit of a punch into a letter than it is for a chappie like me. Anyway, there's no doubt that Rocky's correspondence was hot stuff. I called Jeeves in and congratulated him.

"Jeeves, you're a wonder!"

"Thank you, sir."

"How you notice everything at these places beats me. I couldn't tell you a thing about them, except that I've had a good time."

"It's just a knack, sir."

"Well, Mr. Todd's letters ought to brace Miss Rockmetteller all right, what?"

"Undoubtedly, sir," agreed Jeeves.

And, by Jove, they did! They certainly did, by George! What I mean to say is, I was sitting in the apartment one afternoon, about a month after the thing had started, smoking a cigarette and resting the oil bean, when the door opened and the voice of Jeeves burst the silence like a bomb.

It wasn't that he spoke loud. He has one of those soft, soothing voices that slide through the atmosphere like the note of a far-off sheep. It was what he said that made me leap like a young gazelle.

"Miss Rockmetteller!"

And in came a large, solid female.

The situation floored me. I'm not denying it. Hamlet must have felt much as I did when his father's ghost bobbed up in the fairway. I'd come to look on Rocky's aunt as such a permanency at her own home that it didn't seem possible that she could really be here in New York. I stared at her. Then I looked at Jeeves. He was standing

there in an attitude of dignified detachment, the chump, when, if ever he should have been rallying round the young master, it was now.

Rocky's aunt looked less like an invalid than anyone I've ever seen, except my Aunt Agatha. She had a good deal of Aunt Agatha about her, as a matter of fact. She looked as if she might be deucedly dangerous if put upon; and something seemed to tell me that she would certainly regard herself as put upon if ever she found out the game which poor old Rocky had been pulling on her.

"Good afternoon," I managed to say.

"How do you do?" she said. "Mr. Cohan?"

"Er—no."

"Mr. Fred Stone?"

"Not absolutely. As a matter of fact, my name's Wooster—Bertie Wooster."

She seemed disappointed. The fine old name of Wooster appeared to mean nothing in her life.

"Isn't Rockmetteller home?" she said. "Where is he?"

She had me with the first shot. I couldn't think of anything to say. I couldn't tell her that Rocky was down in the country, watching worms.

There was the faintest flutter of sound in the background. It was the respectful cough with which Jeeves announces that he is about to speak without having been spoken to.

"MISS ROCKMETTELLER!"

"If you remember, sir, Mr. Todd went out in the automobile with a party earlier in the afternoon."

"So he did, Jeeves; so he did," I said, looking at my watch. "Did he say when he would be back?"

"He gave me to understand, sir, that he would be somewhat late in returning."

He vanished; and the aunt took the chair which I'd forgotten to offer her. She looked at me in rather a rummy way. It was a nasty look. It made me feel as if I were something the dog had brought in and intended to bury later on, when he had time. My own Aunt Agatha, back in England, has looked at me in exactly the same way many a time, and it never fails to make my spine curl.

"You seem very much at home here, young man. Are you a great friend of Rockmetteller's?"

"Oh, yes, rather!"

She frowned as if she had expected better things of old Rocky.

"Well, you need to be," she said, "the way you treat his flat as your own!"

I give you my word, this quite unforeseen slam simply robbed me of the power of speech. I'd been looking on myself in the light of the dashing host, and suddenly to be treated as an intruder jarred me. It wasn't, mark you, as if she had spoken in a way to suggest that she considered my presence in the place as an ordinary social call. She obviously looked on me as a cross between a burglar and the plumber's man come to fix the leak in the bathroom. It hurt her—my being there.

At this juncture, with the conversation showing every sign of being about to die in awful agonies, an idea came to me. Tea—the good old stand-by.

"Would you care for a cup of tea?" I said.

"Tea?"

She spoke as if she had never heard of the stuff.

"Nothing like a cup after a journey," I said. "Bucks you up! Puts a bit of zip into you. What I mean is, restores you, and so on, don't you know. I'll go and tell Jeeves."

I tottered down the passage to Jeeves' lair. The man was reading the evening paper as if he hadn't a care in the world.

"Jeeves," I said, "we want some tea."

"Very good, sir."

"I say, Jeeves, this is a bit thick, what?"

I wanted sympathy, don't you know—sympathy and kindness. The old nerve centres had had the deuce of a shock.

"She's got the idea this place belongs to Mr. Todd. What on earth put that into her head?"

Jeeves filled the kettle with a restrained dignity.

"No doubt because of Mr. Todd's letters, sir," he said. "It was my suggestion, sir, if you remember, that they should be addressed from this apartment in order that Mr. Todd should appear to possess a good central residence in the city."

I remembered. We had thought it a brainy scheme at the time.

"Well, it's bally awkward, you know, Jeeves. She looks on me as an intruder. By Jove! I suppose she thinks I'm someone who hangs about here, touching Mr. Todd for free meals and borrowing his shirts."

"Yes, sir."

"It's pretty rotten, you know."

"Most disturbing, sir."

"And there's another thing: What are we to do about Mr. Todd? We've got to get him up here as soon as ever we can. When you have brought the tea you had better go out and send him a telegram, telling him to come up by the next train."

"I have already done so, sir. I took the liberty of writing the message and dispatching it by the lift attendant."

"By Jove, you think of everything, Jeeves!"

"Thank you, sir. A little buttered toast with the tea? Just so, sir. Thank you."

I went back to the sitting-room. She hadn't moved an inch. She was still bolt upright on the edge of her chair, gripping her umbrella like a hammer-thrower. She gave me another of those looks as I came in. There was no doubt about it; for some reason she had taken a dislike to me. I suppose because I wasn't George M. Cohan. It was a bit hard on a chap.

"This is a surprise, what?" I said, after about five minutes' restful silence, trying to crank the conversation up again.

"What is a surprise?"

"Your coming here, don't you know, and so on."

She raised her eyebrows and drank me in a bit more through her glasses.

"Why is it surprising that I should visit my only nephew?" she said.

Put like that, of course, it did seem reasonable.

"Oh, rather," I said. "Of course! Certainly. What I mean is——"

Jeeves projected himself into the room with the tea. I was jolly glad to see him. There's nothing like having a bit of business arranged for one when one isn't certain of one's lines. With the teapot to fool about with I felt happier.

"Tea, tea, tea—what? What?" I said.

It wasn't what I had meant to say. My idea had been to be a good deal more formal, and so on. Still, it covered the situation. I poured her out a cup. She sipped it and put the cup down with a shudder.

"Do you mean to say, young man," she said, frostily, "that you expect me to drink this stuff?"

"Rather! Bucks you up, you know."

"What do you mean by the expression 'Bucks you up'?"

"Well, makes you full of beans, you know. Makes you fizz."

"I don't understand a word you say. You're English, aren't you?"

I admitted it. She didn't say a word. And somehow she did it in a way that made it worse than if she had spoken for hours. Somehow it was brought home to me that she didn't like Englishmen, and that if she had had to meet an Englishman I was the one she'd have chosen last.

Conversation languished again after that.

Then I tried again. I was becoming more convinced every moment that you can't make a real lively *salon* with a couple of people, especially if one of them lets it go a word at a time.

"Are you comfortable at your hotel?" I said.

"At which hotel?"

"The hotel you're staying at."

"I am not staying at an hotel."

"Stopping with friends—what?"

"I am naturally stopping with my nephew."

I didn't get it for the moment; then hit it me.

"What! Here?" I gurgled.

"Certainly! Where else should I go?"

The full horror of the situation rolled over me like a wave. I couldn't see what on earth I was to do. I couldn't explain that this wasn't Rocky's flat without giving the poor old chap away hopelessly, because she would then ask me where he did live, and then he would be right in the soup. I was trying to induce the old bean to recover from the shock and produce some results when she spoke again.

"Will you kindly tell my nephew's man-servant to prepare my room? I wish to lie down."

"Your nephew's man-servant?"

"The man you call Jeeves. If Rockmetteller has gone for an automobile ride there is no need for you to wait for him. He will naturally wish to be alone with me when he returns."

I found myself tottering out of the room. The thing was too much for me. I crept into Jeeves's den.

"Jeeves!" I whispered.

"Sir?"

"Mix me a b.-and-s., Jeeves. I feel weak."

"Very good, sir."

"This is getting thicker every minute, Jeeves."

"Sir?"

"She thinks you're Mr. Todd's man. She thinks the whole place is his, and everything in it. I don't see what you're to do, except stay on and keep it up. We can't say anything or she'll get on to the whole thing, and I don't want to let Mr. Todd down. By the way, Jeeves, she wants you to prepare her bed."

He looked wounded.

"It is hardly my place, sir——"

"I know—I know. But do it as a personal favour to me. If you come to that, it's hardly my place to be flung out of the flat like this and have to go to an hotel, what?"

"Is it your intention to go to an hotel, sir? What will you do for clothes?"

"Good Lord! I hadn't thought of that. Can you put a few things in a bag when she isn't looking, and sneak them down to me at the St. Aurea?"

"I will endeavour to do so, sir."

"Well, I don't think there's anything more, is there? Tell Mr. Todd where I am when he gets here."

"Very good, sir."

I looked round the place. The moment of parting had come. I felt sad. The whole thing reminded me of one of those melodramas where they drive chappies out of the old homestead into the snow.

"Good-bye, Jeeves," I said.

"Good-bye, sir."

And I staggered out.

You know, I rather think I agree with those poet-and-philosopher Johnnies who insist that a fellow ought to be devilish pleased if he has a bit of trouble. All that stuff about being refined by suffering, you know. Suffering does give a chap a sort of broader and more sympathetic outlook. It helps you to understand other people's misfortunes if you've been through the same thing yourself.

As I stood in my lonely bedroom at the hotel, trying to tie my white tie myself, it struck me for the first time that there must be whole squads of chappies in the world who had to get along without a man to look after them. I'd always thought of Jeeves as a kind of natural phenomenon; but, by Jove! of course, when you come to think of it, there must be quite a lot of fellows who have to press their own clothes themselves, and haven't got anybody to bring them tea in the morning, and so on. It was rather a solemn thought, don't you know. I mean to say, ever since then I've been able to appreciate the frightful privations the poor have to stick.

I got dressed somehow. Jeeves hadn't forgotten a thing in his packing. Everything was there, down to the final stud. I'm not sure this didn't make me feel worse. It kind of deepened the pathos. It was like what somebody or other wrote about the touch of a vanished hand.

I had a bit of dinner somewhere and went to a show of some kind; but nothing seemed to make any difference. I simply hadn't the heart to go on to supper anywhere. I just sucked down a whisky-and-soda in the hotel smoking-room and went straight up to bed. I don't know when I've felt so rotten. Somehow I found myself moving about the room softly, as if there had been a death in the family. If I had had anybody to talk to I should have talked in a whisper; in fact, when the telephone-bell rang I answered in such a sad, hushed voice that the fellow at the other end of the wire said "Halloa!" five times, thinking he hadn't got me.

It was Rocky. The poor old scout was deeply agitated.

"Bertie! Is that you, Bertie? Oh, gosh! I'm having a time!"

"Where are you speaking from?"

"The Midnight Revels. We've been here an hour, and I think we're a fixture for the night. I've told Aunt Isabel I've gone out to call up a friend to join us. She's glued to a chair, with this-is-the-life written all over her, taking it in through the pores. She loves it, and I'm nearly crazy."

"Tell me all, old top," I said.

"A little more of this," he said, "and I shall sneak quietly off to the river and end it all. Do you mean to say you go through this sort of thing every night, Bertie, and enjoy it? It's simply infernal! I was just snatching a wink of sleep behind the bill of fare just now when about a million yelling girls swooped down, with toy balloons. There are two orchestras here, each trying to see if it can't play louder than the other. I'm a mental and physical wreck. When your telegram arrived I was just lying down for a quiet pipe, with a sense of absolute peace stealing over me. I had to get dressed and sprint two miles to catch the train. It nearly gave me heart-failure; and on top of that I almost got brain fever inventing lies to tell Aunt Isabel. And then I had to cram myself into these confounded evening clothes of yours."

I gave a sharp wail of agony. It hadn't struck me till then that Rocky was depending on my wardrobe to see him through.

"You'll ruin them!"

"I hope so," said Rocky, in the most unpleasant way. His troubles seemed to have had the worst effect on his character. "I should like to get back at them somehow; they've given me a bad enough time. They're about three sizes too small, and something's apt to give at any moment. I wish to goodness it would, and give me a chance to breathe. I haven't breathed since half-past seven. Thank Heaven, Jeeves managed to get out and buy me a collar that fitted, or I should be a strangled corpse by now! It was touch and go till the stud broke. Bertie, this is pure Hades! Aunt Isabel keeps on urging me to dance. How on earth can I dance when I don't know a soul to dance with? And how the deuce could I, even if I knew every girl in the place? It's taking big chances even to move in these trousers. I had to tell her I've hurt my ankle. She keeps asking me when Cohan and Stone are going to turn up; and it's simply a question of time before she discovers that Stone is sitting two tables away. Something's got to be done, Bertie. You've got to think up some way of getting me out of this mess. It was you who got me into it."

"Me! What do you mean?"

"Well, Jeeves, then. It's all the same. It was you who suggested leaving it to Jeeves. It was those letters I wrote from his notes that did the mischief. I made them too good! My aunt's just been telling me about it. She says she had resigned herself to ending her life where she was, and then my letters began to arrive, describing the joys of New York; and they stimulated her to such an extent that she pulled herself together and made the trip. She seems to think she's had some miraculous kind of faith cure. I tell you I can't stand it, Bertie! It's got to end!"

"Can't Jeeves think of anything?"

"No. He just hangs round, saying: 'Most disturbing, sir!' A fat lot of help that is!"

"Well, old lad," I said, "after all, it's far worse for me than it is for you. You've got a comfortable home and Jeeves. And you're saving a lot of money."

"Saving money? What do you mean—saving money?"

"Why, the allowance your aunt was giving you. I suppose she's paying all the expenses now, isn't she?"

"Certainly she is; but she's stopped the allowance. She wrote the lawyers to-night. She says that, now she's in New York, there is no necessity for it to go on, as we shall always be together, and it's simpler for her to look after that end of it. I tell you, Bertie, I've examined the darned cloud with a microscope, and if it's got a silver lining it's some little dissembler!"

"But, Rocky, old top, it's too bally awful! You've no notion of what I'm going through in this beastly hotel, without Jeeves. I must get back to the flat."

"Don't come near the flat!"

"But it's my own flat."

"I can't help that. Aunt Isabel doesn't like you. She asked me what you did for a living. And when I told her you didn't do anything she said she thought as much, and that you were a typical specimen of a useless and decaying aristocracy. So if you think you have made a hit, forget it. Now I must be going back, or she'll be coming out here after me. Good-bye."

Next morning Jeeves came round. It was all so home-like when he floated noise-

lessly into the room that I nearly broke down.

"Good morning, sir," he said. "I have brought a few more of your personal belongings."

He began to unstrap the suit-case he was carrying.

"Did you have any trouble sneaking them away?"

"It was not easy, sir. I had to watch my chance. Miss Rockmetteller is a remarkably alert lady."

"You know, Jeeves, say what you like—this *is* a bit thick, isn't it?"

"The situation is certainly one that has never before come under my notice, sir. I have brought the heather-mixture suit, as the climatic conditions are congenial. To-morrow, if not prevented, I will endeavour to add the brown lounge with the faint green twill."

"It can't go on—this sort of thing—Jeeves."

"We must hope for the best, sir."

"Can't you think of anything to do?"

"I have been giving the matter considerable thought, sir, but so far without success. I am placing three silk shirts—the dove-coloured, the light blue, and the mauve—in the first long drawer, sir."

"You don't mean to say you can't think of anything, Jeeves?"

"For the moment, sir, no. You will find a dozen handkerchiefs and the tan socks in the upper drawer on the left." He strapped the suit-case and put it on a chair. "A curious lady, Miss Rockmetteller, sir."

"You understate it, Jeeves."

He gazed meditatively out of the window.

"In many ways, sir, Miss Rockmetteller reminds me of an aunt of mine who resides in the south-east portion of London. Their temperaments are much alike. My aunt has the same taste for the pleasures of the great city. It is a passion with her to ride in hansom cabs, sir. Whenever the family take their eyes off her she escapes from the house and spends the day riding about in cabs. On several occasions she has broken into the children's savings bank to secure the means to enable her to gratify this desire."

"I love to have these little chats with you about your female relatives, Jeeves," I said, coldly, for I felt that the man had let me down, and I was fed up with him. "But I don't see what all this has got to do with my trouble."

"I beg your pardon, sir. I am leaving a small assortment of our neckties on the mantelpiece, sir, for you to select according to your preference. I should recommend the blue with the red domino pattern, sir."

Then he streamed imperceptibly toward the door and flowed silently out.

I've often heard that chappies, after some great shock or loss, have a habit, after they've been on the floor for a while wondering what hit them, of picking themselves up and piecing themselves together, and sort of taking a whirl at beginning a new life. Time, the great healer, and Nature, adjusting itself, and so on and so forth. There's a lot in it. I know, because in my own case, after a day or two of what you might call prostration, I began to recover. The frightful loss of Jeeves made any thought of pleasure more or less of a mockery, but at least I found that I was able to have a dash at enjoying life again. What I mean is, I braced up to the extent of going round the cabarets once more, so as to try to forget, if only for the moment.

New York's a small place when it comes to the part of it that wakes up just as the rest is going to bed, and it wasn't long before my tracks began to cross old Rocky's. I saw him once at Peale's, and again at Frolics on the Roof. There wasn't anybody with him either time except the aunt, and, though he was trying to look as if he had struck the ideal life, it wasn't difficult for me, knowing the circumstances, to see that beneath the mask the poor chap was suffering. My heart bled for the fellow. At least, what there was of it that wasn't bleeding for myself bled for him. He had the air of one who was about to crack under the strain.

It seemed to me that the aunt was looking slightly upset also. I took it that she was beginning to wonder when the celebrities were going to surge round, and what had suddenly become of all those wild, careless spirits Rocky used to mix with in his letters. I didn't blame her. I had only read a couple of his letters, but they certainly gave the impression that poor old Rocky was by way of being the hub of New York night life, and that, if by any chance he failed to show up at a cabaret, the management said, "What's the use?" and put up the shutters.

The next two nights I didn't come across them, but the night after that I was sitting by myself at the Maison Pierre when somebody tapped me on the shoulder-blade, and I found Rocky standing beside me, with a sort of mixed expression of wistfulness and apoplexy on his face. How the chappie had

"I FOUND ROCKY STANDING BESIDE ME, WITH A SORT OF MIXED EXPRESSION OF WISTFULNESS AND APOPLEXY ON HIS FACE."

contrived to wear my evening clothes so many times without disaster was a mystery to me. He confided later that early in the proceedings he had slit the waistcoat up the back and that that had helped a bit.

For a moment I had the idea that he had managed to get away from his aunt for the evening; but, looking past him, I saw that she was in again. She was at a table over by the wall, looking at me as if I were something the management ought to be complained to about.

"Bertie, old scout," said Rocky, in a quiet, sort of crushed voice, "we've always been pals, haven't we? I mean, you know I'd do you a good turn if you asked me."

"My dear old lad," I said. The man had moved me.

"Then, for Heaven's sake, come over and sit at our table for the rest of the evening."

Well, you know, there are limits to the sacred claims of friendship.

"My dear chap," I said, "you know I'd do anything in reason; but——"

"You must come, Bertie. You've got to. Something's got to be done to divert her mind. She's brooding about something. She's been like that for the last two days. I think she's beginning to suspect. She can't understand why we never seem to meet anyone I know at these joints. A few nights ago I happened to run into two newspaper men I used to know fairly well. That kept me going for a while. I introduced them to Aunt Isabel as David Belasco and Jim Corbett, and it went well. But the effect has worn off now, and she's beginning to wonder again. Something's got to be done, or she will find out everything, and if she does I'd take a nickel for my chance of getting a cent from her later on. So, for the love of Mike, come across to our table and help things along."

I went along. One has to rally round a pal in distress. Aunt Isabel was sitting bolt upright, as usual. It certainly did seem as if she had lost a bit of the zest with which she had started out to explore Broadway. She looked as if she had been thinking a good deal about rather unpleasant things.

"You've met Bertie Wooster, Aunt Isabel?" said Rocky.

"I have."

There was something in her eye that seemed to say:—

"Out of a city of six million people, why did you pick on me?"

"Take a seat, Bertie. What'll you have?" said Rocky.

And so the merry party began. It was one of those jolly, happy, bread-crumbling parties where you cough twice before you speak, and then decide not to say it after all. After we had had an hour of this wild dissipation, Aunt Isabel said she wanted to go home. In the light of what Rocky had been telling me, this struck me as sinister. I had gathered that at the beginning of her visit she had had to be dragged home with ropes.

It must have hit Rocky the same way, for he gave me a pleading look.

"You'll come along, won't you, Bertie, and have a drink at the flat?"

I had a feeling that this wasn't in the contract, but there wasn't anything to be done. It seemed brutal to leave the poor chap alone with the woman, so I went along.

Right from the start, from the moment we stepped into the taxi, the feeling began to grow that something was about to break loose. A massive silence prevailed in the corner where the aunt sat, and, though Rocky, balancing himself on the little seat in front, did his best to supply dialogue, we weren't a chatty party.

I had a glimpse of Jeeves as we went into the flat, sitting in his lair, and I wished I could have called to him to rally round. Something told me that I was about to need him.

The stuff was on the table in the sitting-room. Rocky took up the decanter.

"Say when, Bertie."

"Stop!" barked the aunt, and he dropped it.

I caught Rocky's eye as he stooped to pick up the ruins. It was the eye of one who sees it coming.

"Leave it there, Rockmetteller!" said Aunt Isabel; and Rocky left it there.

"The time has come to speak," she said. "I cannot stand idly by and see a young man going to perdition!"

Poor old Rocky gave a sort of gurgle, a kind of sound rather like the whisky had made running out of the decanter on to my carpet.

"Eh?" he said, blinking.

The aunt proceeded.

"The fault," she said, "was mine. I had not then seen the light. But now my eyes are open. I see the hideous mistake I have made. I shudder at the thought of the wrong I did you, Rockmetteller, by urging you into contact with this wicked city."

I saw Rocky grope feebly for the table. His fingers touched it, and a look of relief came into the poor chappie's face. I understood his feelings.

"But when I wrote you that letter, Rockmetteller, instructing you to go to the city and live its life, I had not had the privilege of hearing Mr. Mundy speak on the subject of New York."

"Jimmy Mundy!" I cried.

You know how it is sometimes when everything seems all mixed up and you suddenly get a clue. When she mentioned Jimmy Mundy I began to understand more or less what had happened. I'd seen it happen before. I remember, back in England, the man I had before Jeeves sneaked off to a meeting on his evening out and came back and denounced me in front of a crowd of chappies I was giving a bit of supper to as a moral leper.

"'STOP!' BARKED THE AUNT, AND HE DROPPED IT."

The aunt gave me a withering up and down.

"Yes; Jimmy Mundy!" she said. "I am surprised at a man of your stamp having heard of him. There is no music, there are no drunken, dancing men, no shameless, flaunting women at his meetings; so for you they would have no attraction. But for others, less dead in sin, he has his message. He has come to save New York from itself; to force it—in his picturesque phrase—to hit the trail. It was three days ago, Rockmetteller, that I first heard him. It was an accident that took me to his meeting. How often in this life a mere accident may shape our whole future!

"You had been called away by that telephone message from Mr. Belasco; so you could not take me to the Hippodrome, as we had arranged. I asked your man-servant, Jeeves, to take me there. The man has very little intelligence. He seems to have misunderstood me. I am thankful that he did. He took me to what I subsequently learned was Madison Square Garden, where Mr. Mundy is holding his meetings. He escorted me to a seat and then left me. And it was not till the meeting had begun that I discovered the mistake which had been made. My seat was in the middle of a row. I could not leave without inconveniencing a great many people, so I remained."

She gulped.

"Rockmetteller, I have never been so thankful for anything else. Mr. Mundy was wonderful! He was like some prophet of old, scourging the sins of the people. He leaped about in a frenzy of inspiration till I feared he would do himself an injury. Sometimes he expressed himself in a somewhat odd manner, but every word carried conviction. He showed me New York in its true colours. He showed me the vanity and wickedness of sitting in gilded haunts of vice, eating lobster when decent people should be in bed.

"He said that the tango and the fox-trot were devices of the devil to drag people down into the Bottomless Pit. He said that there was more sin in ten minutes with a negro banjo orchestra than in all the ancient revels of Nineveh and Babylon. And when he stood on one leg and pointed right at where I was sitting and shouted 'This means you!' I could have sunk through the floor. I came away a changed woman. Surely you must have noticed the change in me, Rockmetteller? You must have seen that I was no longer the careless, thoughtless person who had urged you to dance in those places of wickedness?"

Rocky was holding on to the table as if it was his only friend.

"Y-yes," he stammered; "I—I thought something was wrong."

"Wrong? Something was right! Everything was right! Rockmetteller, it is not too late for you to be saved. You have only sipped of the evil cup. You have not drained it. It will be hard at first, but you will find that you can do it if you fight with a stout heart against the glamour and fascination of this dreadful city. Won't you, for my sake,

try, Rockmetteller? Won't you go back to the country to-morrow and begin the struggle? Little by little, if you use your will——"

I can't help thinking it must have been that word "will" that roused dear old Rocky like a trumpet call. It must have brought home to him the realization that a miracle had come off and saved him from being cut out of Aunt Isabel's. At any rate, as she said it he perked up, let go of the table, and faced her with gleaming eyes.

"Do you want me to go back to the country, Aunt Isabel?"

"Yes."

"Not to live in the country?"

"Yes, Rockmetteller."

"Stay in the country all the time, do you mean? Never come to New York?"

"Yes, Rockmetteller; I mean just that. It is the only way. Only there can you be safe from temptation. Will you do

"HE POINTED RIGHT AT WHERE I WAS SITTING, AND SHOUTED 'THIS MEANS YOU!'"

it, Rockmetteller? Will you — for my sake?"

Rocky grabbed the table again. He seemed to draw a lot of encouragement from that table.

"I will!" he said.

"Jeeves," I said. It was next day, and I was back in the old flat, lying in the old armchair, with my feet upon the good old table. I had just come from seeing dear old Rocky off to his country cottage, and an hour before he had seen his aunt off to whatever hamlet it was that she was the curse of; so we were alone at last. "Jeeves, there's no place like home—what?"

"Very true, sir."

"The jolly old roof-tree, and all that sort of thing—what?"

"Precisely, sir."

I lit another cigarette.

"Jeeves."

"Sir?"

"Do you know, at one point in the business I really thought you were baffled."

"Indeed, sir?"

"When did you get the idea of taking Miss Rockmetteller to the meeting? It was pure genius!"

"Thank you, sir. It came to me a little suddenly, one morning when I was thinking of my aunt, sir."

"Your aunt? The hansom cab one?"

"Yes, sir. I recollected that, whenever we observed one of her attacks coming on, we used to send for the clergyman of the parish. We always found that if he talked to her a while of higher things it diverted her mind from hansom cabs. It occurred to me that the same treatment might prove efficacious in the case of Miss Rockmetteller."

I was stunned by the man's resource.

"It's brain," I said; "pure brain! What do you do to get like that, Jeeves? I believe you must eat a lot of fish, or something. Do you eat a lot of fish, Jeeves?"

"No, sir."

"Oh, well, then, it's just a gift, I take it; and if you aren't born that way there's no use worrying."

"Precisely, sir," said Jeeves. "If I might make the suggestion, sir, I should not continue to wear your present tie. The green shade gives you a slightly bilious air. I should strongly advocate the blue with the red domino pattern instead, sir."

"All right, Jeeves," I said, humbly. "You know!"

THE MUSIC OF THE RESTAURANT.

By HUGH ARTHUR SCOTT.

Illustrated by H. M. Bateman.

WHO invented restaurant music? When and by whom was it first provided in London? Music with meals in itself is, of course, a custom of very old standing. Without going back to the days of Isaiah, who complained of the Jews that "the harp and the viol and the tabret are in their feasts," or of Nebuchadnezzar and other Biblical worthies, it may be recalled that in England from the earliest times, and elsewhere throughout Europe, the minstrel at the feast was one of the most firmly-established institutions, as innumerable records testify. Chaucer, in "The Merchant's Tale," gives a vivid account of the music provided at a wedding banquet, and countless other passages could be cited from the ancient records in illustration of the fact. Of Queen Elizabeth—to pass from Chaucer's day to Shakespeare's—we are told that when she dined she was "regaled with twelve trumpets and two kettle-drums, which, together with fifes, cornets, and side-drums, made the hall ring for half an hour together."

In modern times the composition of the band would be somewhat different, but now, as then, music in some form or other is regarded as an indispensable ingredient of any banquet with any pretensions to completeness. Even at purely private dinner-parties of the present day given by people of wealth and rank a band is more often than not engaged to perform during the meal.

Music on such occasions as these, however, differs from the provision of music for the benefit of the patrons of hotels and restaurants, and to trace the origin of this practice it is not needful to go back nearly so far. It was, indeed, little more than half a century ago that music was first supplied in this way in London, by the brothers A. and S. Gatti.

When, in 1862, the business was transferred from Villiers Street to larger premises in the Strand, it was naturally proposed to continue a feature which had already proved its worth. But this time an unexpected obstacle was encountered in the person of the vicar of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields hard by, who was horrified at the notion of people eating

chops and chips to the accompaniment of overtures and waltzes, and who protested to such purpose that in the end the necessary licence was withdrawn. On what precise grounds the vicar based his objections I do not know, but it certainly serves to illustrate the change of opinion which has since taken place on the subject that his arguments were not only listened to, but actually prevailed—for a time at least. Obviously, however, such an indefensible restriction was not one to be permanently maintained, and so, when some years later (1874) the Holborn Restaurant was opened with music as one of its leading attractions, there seems to have been no more thought of opposition, and the Heavenly Maid was thenceforward given the freedom of all hotels and restaurants of the town.

At the Holborn, which, by the way, had been previously the Holborn Casino, where dances in the winter months alternated with baths in the summer, the musical arrangements were on a considerable scale from the beginning—the orchestra engaged numbering some sixteen players, and being decidedly larger, therefore, than the majority of those employed in even the most important restaurants at the present time. The innovation found such immediate favour, however, that the directors saw no occasion whatever to regret their enterprise.

As regards other establishments which led the way in this matter, one of the earliest to follow the Holborn's example was the old St. James's in Piccadilly — the famous "Jimmy's," so beloved by the gilded youth of the period—which, it will be remembered, formed part of the same building as the old St. James's Hall, the most famous of London's concert rooms, the site of which is to-day occupied by the palatial Piccadilly Hotel. Here, too, the celebrated Moore and Burgess Minstrels had their headquarters at this period, so that with the concert room above, the minstrels below, and the restaurant with its orchestra hard by, there was certainly no lack of music in this quarter in those days. And it may be said that the tradition is to some extent still maintained, seeing that the band of the present Piccadilly Restaurant, under Mr. De Groot, is recognized as one of the best in London.

Then, later, came the Krasnapolsky, in Oxford Street, which is known to-day as Frascati's, while in a different category the Savoy was another establishment which was famous from the first for the completeness of its musical arrangements. Since then the custom has developed to a truly amazing extent, so that to-day there is hardly a tea-shop even with any pretensions which is not provided with its ladies' orchestra, while as for hotels and restaurants, the total amount expended by these establishments under this head nowadays must be something astonishing.

Take as one case only that of Messrs. Lyons and Co., who have kindly supplied some exact information on the subject for the purpose of this article. They have in their various London establishments alone over a dozen different orchestras, while their total expenditure on music amounts to upwards of *forty thousand pounds a year!* So far have we advanced from the time when music was regarded by restaurant proprietors as a negligible quantity, if not an unnecessary evil. Messrs. Lyons have been pioneers in this matter, not only in respect of the lavishness of their outlay, but also in respect of the quality of the music provided. Thus they have led the way in engaging artists of the very first distinction to appear for them—and they are careful to point out that, so far from giving such artists less than their usual concert fees, they generally find it necessary to pay them a good deal more in order to overcome any lingering prejudices which still exist in musical circles in respect of such engagements. Yet when vocalists of the repute of Mr. Walter Hyde, Mr. Thorpe Bates, and the like have not thought it beneath their dignity to sing while their listeners sup, others certainly need not hesitate to follow. Indeed, signs are not wanting that the profession at large is beginning at length to realize what an important addition to their field of operations is to be found nowadays in this direction. Certainly the number of purely musical organizations in existence expending as much as forty thousand pounds a year on the payment of artists is not very large, wherefore the day has gone by for even the most eminent performers to affect indifference or "superiority" to such a valuable addition to their possible sources of income.

Perhaps the most distinguished artist who has up to the present accepted a permanent daily engagement in work of this class is Mr. Zacharewitsch, the famous violinist, who has been acting for some twelve months now as *chef d'orchestre* and soloist at the Regent Palace Hotel, Piccadilly Circus, at a salary which it is no secret runs well into four figures. And Mr. Zacharewitsch declares that, apart from the handsome salary attached to the

position, he thoroughly enjoys the work. At first, it is true, he found it a little trying to play under such conditions after the stillness and attention to which he was accustomed in the concert room, and on more than one occasion, he confesses, he was moved to take rather strong measures to compel a proper amount of attention and respect. He recalls, indeed, in this connection the remark of one non-musical guest which was afterwards brought back to him: "Good heavens! this chap won't let you breathe even while he's doing his blessed fiddling!"

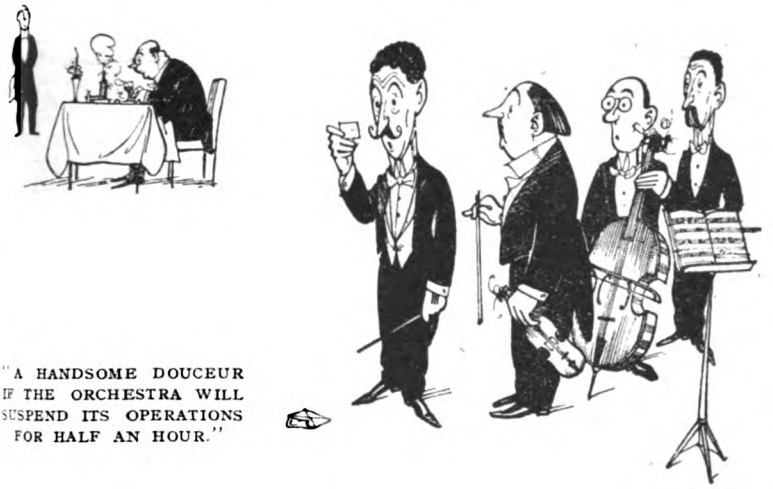
But now he is much less troubled in this way, partly because he has learnt from experience that even the most restless and inattentive audience can always be captured and subdued with a little patience and persistence. In this connection Mr. Zacharewitsch's testimony on one point is rather interesting, since he has found that if he is not quite in the vein and doing absolutely his best, then his efforts go for comparatively little and he never succeeds in securing that complete conquest of his hearers which he aims at. "It is really very curious," he observed, "for I suppose there is no difference in my playing which anyone but myself would be aware of—and yet the effect as regards the public is unmistakable. They are not moved. My playing falls flat. The applause is half-hearted. There is just lacking, I suppose, that complete *rapprochement* between performer and listener, that touch of personal magnetism, that makes all the difference."

As to the music which he chooses, Mr. Zacharewitsch plays the very stiffest works at times—things which might be supposed to be quite over the heads of the ordinary non-musical public, such as the concertos of Brahms, Tchaikovsky, and Elgar; Bach's Chaconne, and so on. And yet he declares that, though such music may not be completely understood by all, it never fails to grip and hold them. They feel that it is great, and appreciate it, so to speak, in spite of themselves. All of which goes to suggest that restaurant music may be a means not only of affording lucrative engagements to the musical profession but also of materially advancing the musical education of the general public.

At the same time it must not be overlooked that the public has its rights in this matter also, and the procedure is not to be commended of the Parisian *chef d'orchestre* who a few years ago tried to establish in the law courts his right to perform, not what his hearers wanted, but what he chose to give them. The legal proceedings arose when, on the hotel proprietor giving him notice, he brought an action for wrongful dismissal. He was, he explained, a highly-talented performer, a prize-winner of the Paris Conservatoire, and so on, and as such, he maintained, he could not be called upon to perform music which he considered unworthy of his powers! It is hardly necessary to say that the Court made short work of such an absurd contention, pointing out that if he chose to play in a restaurant he must either provide the sort of music which his proprietor required or seek employment elsewhere.

An older establishment than the Regent Palace Hotel, in the case of which, as I have already remarked, much attention has always been paid to music, is the Savoy, where the present musical director is Mr. Yakov Krein, who hails from Petrograd, where he studied under Auer, the well-known teacher of Mischa Elman and other famous players. According to Mr. Krein, restaurant audiences differ surprisingly in their musical tastes, and no little care and judgment are required to give them always exactly what they want, for he fully agrees with what has been observed above, that it is no part of the functions of a restaurant orchestra to educate the public—at any rate, not to the extent of playing music which they do not wish to hear. Not only, he says, do different restaurants require different kinds of music—even though frequented by apparently just the same class of people—but even at the same establishment the same class of programme is not always suitable. On the contrary, the judicious conductor bent on supplying "what the public wants" takes careful stock of his audience in the first place, and then, having formed his impression of their requirements, proceeds to select his pieces accordingly.

It must be, one would think, a task of some difficulty to deduce in this way the musical tastes of a roomful of people with no further assistance than that afforded by a general survey of the company, since appearances are proverbially deceptive. That soulful-looking lady, for instance, with an expression suggestive of all that is romantic and sentimental, may in reality be tone-deaf, or perhaps a devotee of ragtime, just as that jovial, country-squire-like person with the loud voice, the hearty laugh, and rubicund visage, apparently bespeaking anything but advanced musical tastes, might be



"A HANDSOME DOUCEUR IF THE ORCHESTRA WILL SUSPEND ITS OPERATIONS FOR HALF AN HOUR."

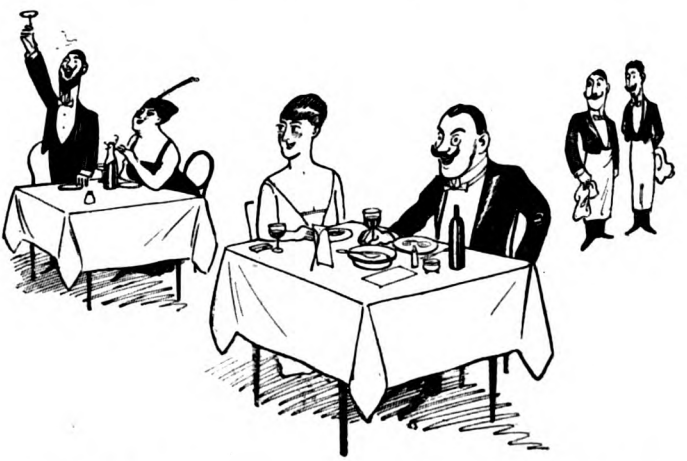
in reality one of our most famous and most serious composers!

But it is Mr. Krein's business, not mine, to solve these delicate problems, and, to do him justice, he confesses that it is not always an easy thing to do.

Otherwise, perhaps it would not have been his experience to receive on one occasion a note on the conclusion of a certain item containing the mysterious question, "Where is the body?" Such an inquiry, one may well believe, was calculated to prove somewhat puzzling, especially to anyone imperfectly acquainted with the language, and to whom also the peculiarly "dry" character of British humour was not at the time too well known. No wonder, therefore, that it required some little reflection before it dawned on him what was the sarcastic insinuation which it was intended to convey in this waggish fashion. But the real cream of the joke in Mr. Krein's opinion resided in the fact that the music in question which was condemned in this way as too funereal consisted in reality of—selections from "Carmen"!

Perhaps after this it is hardly surprising that Mr. Krein has not a very high opinion of the musical tastes of the fashionable London public at the present day. He considers, indeed, that so far from improving in this respect they have distinctly deteriorated during recent years. Whether this is to be ascribed to the demoralizing influence of ragtime or to some other cause he does not undertake to say, but of the fact itself he is absolutely satisfied on the strength of his own experiences. And doubtless he would add as confirmatory evidence some of the amazing requests which have reached him at times in his capacity as *chef d'orchestre*. There is the gentleman, for instance, who sends along a polite note requesting that the band will play, say, the "Pathetic" Symphony of Tchaikovsky, sublimely unconscious of the fact that a work of such dimensions is entirely beyond the resources of even the finest of restaurant bands; while in just the opposite direction is the unflattering communication which promises a handsome *douceur* if the orchestra will suspend its operations altogether for half an hour. Truly it takes all sorts to make up the world, and no one discovers this much more quickly than the director of a restaurant band.

Another whose evidence on the subject is interesting is Mr. De Groot, the excellence of

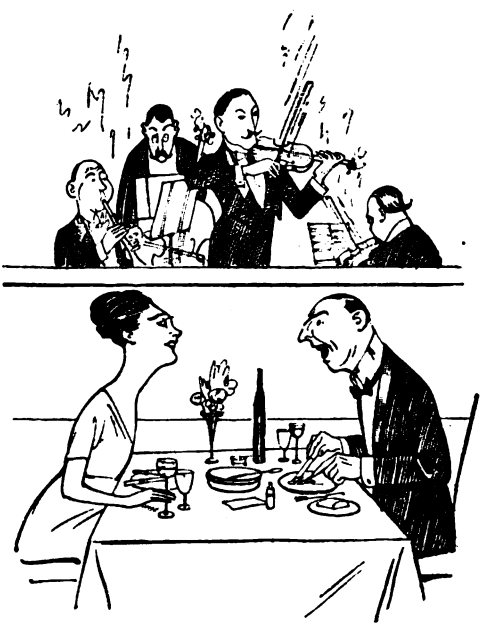


"THE PUBLIC GETS AS EXCITED AND ENTHUSIASTIC AS IF AT A THEATRE."

whose work as conductor of the orchestra at the Piccadilly Restaurant has already been referred to. Mr. De Groot, like Mr. Krein, is also of the opinion that the conductor who hopes to achieve the best results must carefully study his audiences and give them the things which really appeal to them. But this need not necessarily be poor music, since even the lightest music can be good of its kind. At the same time, Mr. De Groot lays stress on the fact that the task of the restaurant orchestra is in some respects peculiarly difficult, precisely because most of the finest music is debarred it, and it is compelled in consequence to get all its results from more or less second-rate material.

The relatively undemonstrative demeanour of even the most appreciative restaurant audience is another factor, says Mr. De Groot, which has to be reckoned with—in London, at all events.

"On the Continent," he observed on this point, "it is so very different. There, if you play something popular, such as selections from a well-known opera, the public gets as excited and enthusiastic as if at a theatre, and the effect, of course, is very stimulating to the performers. Not that I have any particular cause to complain, for our audiences at the Piccadilly are always most kind and appreciative — but in the English, not the Continental way."



"SEATED IN UNDUE PROXIMITY TO THE PERFORMERS' PLATFORM."

In this connection, too, it must always be borne in mind that some people—and not only the unmusical, either—do not like restaurant music at all; and no doubt there is quite a good deal to be said in support of the opinion emphatically upheld by some that music in the dining-room is a good thing out of place. Certainly there can be few frequenters of restaurants who have not been disposed to adopt this view at times when by ill luck they have found themselves seated in undue proximity to the performers' platform, for few experiences are more exasperating than that of trying to maintain a conversation under such conditions. "The nearer the trombone the sweeter the meat" is a perverted proverb whose authorship has been ascribed to Mr. Sousa; but its accuracy would certainly not be endorsed by most.

At the same time there is pretty general agreement among restaurant proprietors and managers of the present day that if music is not invariably regarded as a boon and a blessing by all of their patrons it is none the less impossible to dispense with it. Mr. Reeves Smith, managing director of the company which controls both Claridge's and the Savoy, as well as the Berkeley, bears witness to interesting effect on this point. "At one time we thought we would be very superior and distinguished by dispensing with music altogether, but we found it did not do. Although people may not listen to the music at all when it is provided, and may even profess to consider it a nuisance, we soon found it was badly missed when we tried to do without it. All the life and gaiety of the place seemed to depart and the general atmosphere was totally different. True we have never believed in making the music too prominent, for we know that this is distasteful to our particular public. But however unobtrusive it may be it is quite a different thing when you abolish it altogether; it must be there somewhere or other in the background."

In contrast with the discretion exercised in this respect nowadays in the best London restaurants may be recalled the very different arrangements which prevailed in bygone times, when the merry Tzigane and his gipsy band was employed without salary and allowed to recoup himself at the expense of the guests by methods barely distinguishable from blackmail. For the practice adopted was for the leader to wander about the room with his fiddle from table to table and play deliber-

ately "at" his selected victim, until the latter, in sheer desperation—or more often perhaps from the fear of appearing mean in the eyes of a fair companion—succumbed, and bought him off. How such a preposterous arrangement could ever have been tolerated it is difficult to understand, but such was certainly the case. Nay, there is even one well-known London restaurant where, within quite recent times, the same procedure, or something very like it, has been permitted by the management, to the astonishment of not a few. As, however, the practice in question has since been abandoned, it may be presumed that those concerned have realized their mistake, and no more need be said on the subject.

A more recent development of restaurant music has been provided since the coming of ragtime by the appearance on the scene of various eminent American composers specializing in this particular line who sing and play their own inspired effusions. Mr. Melville Gideon is one well-known practitioner who has done a good deal in this way, while Mr. Nat D. Ayer is another. And such performances prove very attractive—if not to the "high-brow" hearer with a soul above ragtime, at all events to the "average sensual man," who finds it just the sort of thing he likes.

In the same way dancing has also been pressed into service as a supplementary means of entertainment for the restaurant public during recent years. The tango boom of two or three years ago was primarily responsible for this particular innovation, and few will need to be reminded of the extent to which the craze prevailed for a time when every establishment with the smallest pretensions to being up to date found it essential to include among its other attractions an exposition of the dance of the hour. Now the tango is no more, but its after-effects remain in the shape of dancing on more general lines, which is found a pleasant addition to the attractions of the music which accompanies it.

Is music an aid or a hindrance to alimentation? This is a question which inevitably comes up for consideration when the subject of what someone has called "meal-time melody" is broached, and it is hardly necessary to add that the opinion of the faculty has been taken on the point. What, then, is the verdict? Is it or is it not desirable to take our soup to the accompaniment of, say, Elgar's "Salut d'Amour"? Does or does not a savoury go down better when its assimilation proceeds concurrently with that of Dvorák's Humoreske? In reply to these momentous questions, the faculty answers characteristically, "Yes—and No."

"THE VICTIM, IN SHEER DESPERATION, SUCCUMBED, AND BOUGHT HIM OFF."

In other words, it all depends on circumstances.

"Feeding the human frame," it has been explained by one authority, "is a most important matter, and theoretically should be undertaken in the calmest and most deliberate manner, with the greater part of one's attention alive to the importance of thorough mastication, and with as little demand on the higher nerve centres as possible, so that the stomach may not be deprived of the blood which it requires for the satisfactory fulfilment of the digestive function. For this reason reading at meals and conversation imparting too severe a tax upon the intellect are alike to be deprecated, and in the same way the effect of a restaurant orchestra playing fast and furious music in immediate proximity could hardly fail to exercise an injurious influence by upsetting the quiet of the nervous system. On the other hand, soft and reposeful music, far enough away not to interfere with conversation, could only have a pleasantly stimulating effect, and is therefore to be cordially approved of." To what extent these views would obtain general support in the medical world I will not undertake to say, but it is reassuring to know that the custom of meal-time music has at least the support of some. For it is certainly one which is not likely now to be abolished.

JIM BRENT'S V.C.

By "SAPPER"

Author of "The Lieutenant and Others" and "Sergeant Michael Cassidy, R.E."

Illustrated by Cyrus Cuneo.

IF you pass through the Menin-gate at Ypres, and walk up the slight rise that lies on the other side of the moat, you will come to the parting of the ways. You will at the same time come to a spot of unprepossessing aspect, whose chief claim to notoriety lies in its shell-holes and broken-down houses. If you keep straight on you will in time come to the little village of Potige; if you turn to the right you will eventually arrive at Hooge. In either case you will wish you hadn't.

Before the war these two roads—which join about two hundred yards east of the rampart walls of Ypres—were adorned with a fair number of houses. They were of that stucco type which one frequently sees in England spreading out along the roads that lead to a largish town. Generally there is one of unusually revolting aspect that stands proudly by itself a hundred yards or so farther out than the common herd. And there my knowledge of the type in England ends.

In Belgium, however, my acquaintance with this sort of abode is extensive. In taking over a house in Flanders that stands unpleasantly near the Hun, one is not constrained to note that there are three sitting, two bed, h. and c. laid on, with excellent onion patch, near railway and good golf-links. The end-all and be-all of a house is its cellar. The more gloomy, and dark, and generally horrible the cellar the more likely are you to find a general, by the light of a tallow dip, consuming his last hamper from Fortnum and Mason in it. And this applies more especially to the Hooge road.

Arrived at the fork, let us turn right-handed, and proceed on foot along the deserted road. A motor-car is not to be advised, as at this stage of the promenade one is in full sight of the German trenches. For about two or three hundred yards no houses screen you, and then comes a row of the stucco residences I have mentioned. Also at this point the road bends to the left. Here, out of sight, occasional men sun themselves in the heavily-scented air, what time they exchange a little playful badinage in a way common to Thomas Atkins. At least, that is what happened some time ago; now, of course, things may have changed in the garden city.

And here really our journey is ended, though for interest we might go on another quarter of a mile. The row of houses stops abruptly and away in front there stretches a long straight road. A few detached mansions of sorts in their own grounds stand back on each side. At length they cease, and in front lies the open country. The poplar-lined road disappears out of sight a mile ahead, where it tops a gentle slope. And half on this side of the rise, and half on the other, there are the remnants of the *bonne bouche* of the whole bloody charnel-house of the Ypres salient—the remnants of the village of Hooge. A closer examination is not to be recommended. The place where you stand is known in the vernacular as Hell Fire Corner, and the Hun—who knows the range of that corner to the fraction of an inch—will quite possibly resent your presence even there. And shrapnel gives a nasty wound.

Let us return and seek safety in a cellar. It is not what one would call a good-looking cellar; no priceless prints adorn the walls, no Turkey carpet receives your jaded feet. In one corner a portable gramophone with several records much the worse for wear reposes on an upturned biscuit-box, and lying on the floor, with due regard to space economy, are three or four of those excellent box-mattresses which form the all-in-all of the average small Belgian house. On top of them are laid some valises and blankets, and on the one in the corner the sweet music of the sleeper strikes softly on the ear. It is the Senior Subaltern, who has been rambling in Sanctuary Wood—the proud authors of our nomenclature in Flanders possess the humour necessary for *Punch*—all the preceding night.

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"'GOOD LORD! MY GOOD FELLOW,' CRIED THE MAJOR, IRRITABLY, 'DON'T BE ABSURD. ARE YOU PROPOSING TO BLOW IT UP?'"

ridiculous." The Major snorted. "Once and for all, Brent, I won't hear of it. We're far too short of fellows as it is."

And for a space the subject languished, though there was a look on Jim Brent's face which showed it was only for a space.

Now when a man of the type of Brent takes it badly over a woman, there is a strong probability of very considerable trouble at any time. When, in addition to that, it occurs in the middle of the bloodiest war of history, the probability becomes a certainty. That he should quite fail to see just what manner of woman the present Lady Goring was, was merely in the nature of the beast. He was—as far as women were concerned—of the genus fool. To him "the rag, and the bone, and the hank of hair" could never be anything but perfect. Perhaps it is as well that there are some men like that.

All of which his Major—who was a man of no little understanding—knew quite well. And the knowledge increased his irritation, for he knew the futility of trying to adjust things. That adjusting business is ticklish work even between two close pals; but when the would-be adjuster is very little more than a mere acquaintance, the chances of success might be put in a small-sized pill-box. To feel morally certain that your best officer is trying his hardest to get himself killed, and to be unable to prevent it, is an irritating state of affairs. Small wonder, then, that at

intervals throughout the days that followed the luncheon I have spoken of, did he reiterate with solemnity and emphasis his remark to the Staff Captain anent women, which eased his feelings, if it did nothing else.

The wild scheme Brent had half-suggested did not trouble him greatly. He regarded it merely as a temporary aberration of the brain, in which the glorious possibilities of an absolutely impossible success had for the moment unbalanced its owner's mind. In the South African war small parties of mounted sappers and cavalry had undoubtedly ridden far into hostile country, and, getting behind the enemy, had blown up bridges, and generally damaged their lines of communication. But in the South African war a line of trenches did not stretch from sea to sea.

And so, seated one evening at the door of his commodious residence talking things over with his Colonel, he did not lay any great stress on the bridge idea. Brent had not referred to it again; and in the cold light of reason it seemed too foolish to mention.

"Of course," remarked the C.R.E., "he's bound to take it soon. No man can go on running the fool risks you say he does without stopping one. It's a pity; but, if he won't see by himself that he's a fool, I don't see what we can do to make it clear. If only that confounded girl——" He grunted and got up to go. "Halloa! What the devil is this fellow doing?"

Shambling down the road towards them was a particularly decrepit and filthy specimen of the Belgian labourer. In normal circumstances, and in any other place, his appearance would have called for no especial comment; the brand is not a rare one. But for many months the salient of Ypres had been cleared of all its civilian population; and the sudden appearance of this one, apparently from nowhere, was not likely to pass unnoticed.

"Venez ici, monsieur, tout de suite." At the Major's words the old man stopped, and paused in hesitation; then he shuffled towards the two men.

"Will you talk to him, Colonel?" The Major glanced at his senior officer.

"Er—I think not; my—er—French, don't you know—er—not what it was." The worthy officer retired in good order, only to be overwhelmed by a perfect deluge of words from the Belgian.

"What's he say?" he queried, peevishly. "That bally Flemish sounds like a dog fight."

"Parlez-vous Français, monsieur?" The Major attempted to stem the tide of the old man's verbosity, but he evidently had a grievance, and a Belgian with a grievance is not a thing to be regarded with a light heart.

"Thank heavens, here's the interpreter!" The Colonel heaved a sigh of relief. "Ask this man what he's doing here, please."

For a space the distant rattle of a machine gun was drowned, and then the interpreter turned to the officers.

"'E say, sare, that 'e has ten thousand franc behind the German line, buried in a 'ole, and 'e wants to know vat 'e shall do."

"Do," laughed the Major. "What does he think he's going to do? Go and dig it up? Tell him that's he's got no business here at all."

Again the interpreter spoke.

"Shall I take 'im to Yper and 'and 'im to the gendarmes, sare?"

"Not a bad idea," said the Colonel, "and have him——"

What further order he was going to give is immaterial, for at that moment he looked at the Belgian, and from that villainous old ruffian he received the most obvious and unmistakable wink.

"Er—thank you, interpreter; I will send him later under a guard."

The interpreter saluted and retired, the Major looked surprised, the Colonel regarded the Belgian with an amazed frown.

Then suddenly the old villain spoke.

"Thank you, Colonel. Those Ypres gendarmes would have been a nuisance."

And the voice was the voice of Brent.

"Great Scot!" gasped the Major. "What the——"

"What the devil is the meaning of this masquerade, sir?" The Colonel was distinctly angry.

"I wanted to see if I'd pass muster as a Belgian, sir. The interpreter was an invaluable proof."

"You run a deuced good chance of being shot, Brent, in that rig. Anyway, I wish for an explanation as to why you're walking about in that get-up. Haven't you enough work to do?"

"Shall we go inside, sir? I've got a favour to ask you."

We are not very much concerned with the conversation that took place downstairs in that same cellar of which I have already told, and in which two senior officers of the corps of Royal Engineers listened for nearly an hour to an apparently disreputable old farmer.

It might have been interesting to note how the sceptical grunts of those two officers gradually gave place to silence, and at length to a profound and breathless interest, as they pored over maps and plans. And the maps were all of that country which lies behind the German trenches.

The closing remark of the speaker, however, I will give.

"That is the rough outline of my plan, sir. I claim that I have reduced the risk of not getting to my objective to a minimum. When I get there I claim that my intimate knowledge of the patois renders the chance of detection small. As for the actual demolition itself, an enormous amount will depend on luck; but I can afford to wait. I shall have to be guided by local conditions. And therefore I ask you to let me go. It's a long odds chance, but if it comes off it's worth it."

"And if it does come off, what then? What about you?" The Colonel's eyes and Jim Brent's met.

"I shall have paid for my keep, Colonel, at any rate."

Everything was very silent in the cellar; outside on the road a man was singing.

"In other words, Jim, you're asking me to allow you to commit suicide."

He cleared his throat; his voice seemed a little husky.

"I am, sir." And there was that in Brent's face which none but a fool could mistake.

"Gad, my lad, you're a fool, but you're a brave fool! For Heaven's sake, give me a drink."

"I may go, Colonel?"

"Yes, you may go—as far, that is, as I am concerned. There is the General Staff to get round first."

But though the Colonel's voice was gruff, he seemed to have some difficulty in finding his glass.

As far as is possible in human nature, Jim Brent, at the period when he gained his V.C. in a manner which made him the hero of the hour—one might almost say of the war—was, I believe, without fear. The blow he had received at the hands of the girl who meant all the world to him had rendered him utterly callous of his life. And it was no transitory feeling: the mood of an hour or a week. It was deeper than the ordinary misery of a man who has taken the knock from a woman, deeper and much less ostentatious. He seemed to view life with a contemptuous toleration that in any other man would have seemed the merest affectation. But it was not shown by his words; it was shown, as his Major had said, by his deeds—deeds that could not be called bravado because he never advertised them. He was simply gambling with death, with a cool hand and a steady eye, and sublimely indifferent to whether he won or lost. Up to the time when he played his last great game with his grim opponent he had borne a charmed life. According to the book of the words, he should have been killed a score of times, and he told me himself only last week that he went into this final gamble with a taunt on his lips and contempt in his heart. Knowing him as I do, I believe it. I can almost hear him saying to himself, "Dash it all! I've won every time; for Heaven's sake do something to justify your reputation."

But—he didn't; Jim won again. And when he landed in England from a Dutch tramp, having carried out the maddest and most hazardous exploit of the war unscathed, he slipped upon a piece of orange-peel and broke his right leg in two places, which made him laugh so immoderately when the contrast struck him that it cured him—not his leg, but his mind. However, all in due course.

The first part of the story I heard from Petersen, of the Naval Air Service. I ran into him by accident in a grocer's shop in Hazebrouck—buying stuff for the mess.

"What news of Jim?" he cried, the instant he saw me.

"Very sketchy," I answered. "He's the worst letter-writer in the world. You know he trod on a bit of orange-peel and broke his leg when he got back to England."

"He would." Petersen smiled. "That's just the sort of thing Jim would do. Men like him usually die of mumps, or the effects of a bad oyster."

"Quite so," I murmured, catching him gently by the arm. "And now come to the pub. over the way and tell me all about it. The beer there is of a less vile brand than usual."

"But I can't tell you anything, my dear chap, that you don't know already!" he expostulated. "I am quite prepared to gargle with you, but——"

"*Deux bières, ma'm'selle, s'il vous plaît.*" I piloted Petersen firmly to a little table. "Tell me all, my son!" I cried. "For the purposes of this meeting I know nix, and you as part hero in the affair have got to get it off your chest."

He laughed, and lit a cigarette. "Not much of the heroic in my part of the stunt,

I assure you. As you know, the show started from Dunkirk, where in due course Jim arrived, armed with credentials extracted only after great persuasion from sceptical officers of high rank. How he ever got there has always been a wonder to me: the Colonel was the least of all his difficulties in that line. But Jim takes a bit of stopping.

"My part of the show was to transport that scatter-brained idiot over the trenches and drop him behind the German lines. His idea was novel, I must admit, though at the time I thought he was mad, and for that matter I still think he's mad. Only a madman could have thought of it, only Jim Brent could have done it and not been killed.

"From a height of three thousand feet, in the middle of the night, he proposed to bid me and the plane a tender farewell and descend to terra firma by means of a parachute."

"Great Scot," I muttered. "Some idea."

"As you say—some idea. The thing was to choose a suitable night. As Jim said, 'the slow descent of a disreputable Belgian peasant like an angel out of the skies will cause a flutter of excitement in the tender heart of the Hun if it is perceived. Therefore, it must be a dark and overcast night.'

"At last, after a week, we got an ideal night. Jim arrayed himself in his togs, took his basket on his arm—you know he'd hidden the gun-cotton in a cheese—and we went round to the machine. By Jove! that chap's a marvel. Think of it, man." Petersen's face was full of enthusiastic admiration. "He'd never even been up in an aeroplane before, and yet the first time he does it is with the full intention of trusting himself to an infernal parachute, a thing the thought of which gives me cold feet; moreover, of doing it in the dark from a height of three thousand odd feet behind the German lines with his pockets full of detonators and other abominations, and his cheese full of gun-cotton. Lord! he's a marvel. And I give you my word that of the two of us—though I've flown for over two years—I was the shaky one. He was absolutely cool; not the coolness of a man who is keeping himself under control, but just the normal coolness of a man who is doing his everyday job."

Petersen finished his beer at a gulp, and we encored the dose.

"Well, we got off about two. We were not aiming at any specific spot, but I was going to go due east for three-quarters of an hour, which I estimated should bring us somewhere over Courtrai. Then he was going to drop off, and I was coming back. The time was chosen so that I should be able to land again at Dunkirk about dawn.

"I can't tell you much more. We escaped detection going over the lines, and about ten minutes to three, at a height of three thousand five hundred, old Jim tapped me on the shoulder. He understood exactly what to do—as far as we could tell him: for the parachute is still almost in its infancy.

"As he had remarked to our wing commander before we started: 'A most valuable experiment, sir; I will report on how it works in due course.'

"We shook hands. I could see him smiling through the darkness; and then, with his basket under his arm, that filthy old Belgian farmer launched himself into space.

"I saw him for a second falling like a stone, and then the parachute seemed to open out all right. But of course I couldn't tell in the dark; and just afterwards I struck an air-pocket, and had a bit of trouble with the bus. After that I turned round and went home again. I'm looking forward to seeing the old boy and hearing what occurred."

And that is the unvarnished account of the first part of Jim's last game with fate. Incidentally, it's the sort of thing that hardly requires any varnishing.

The rest of the yarn I heard later from Brent himself, when I went round to see him in hospital, while I was back on leave.

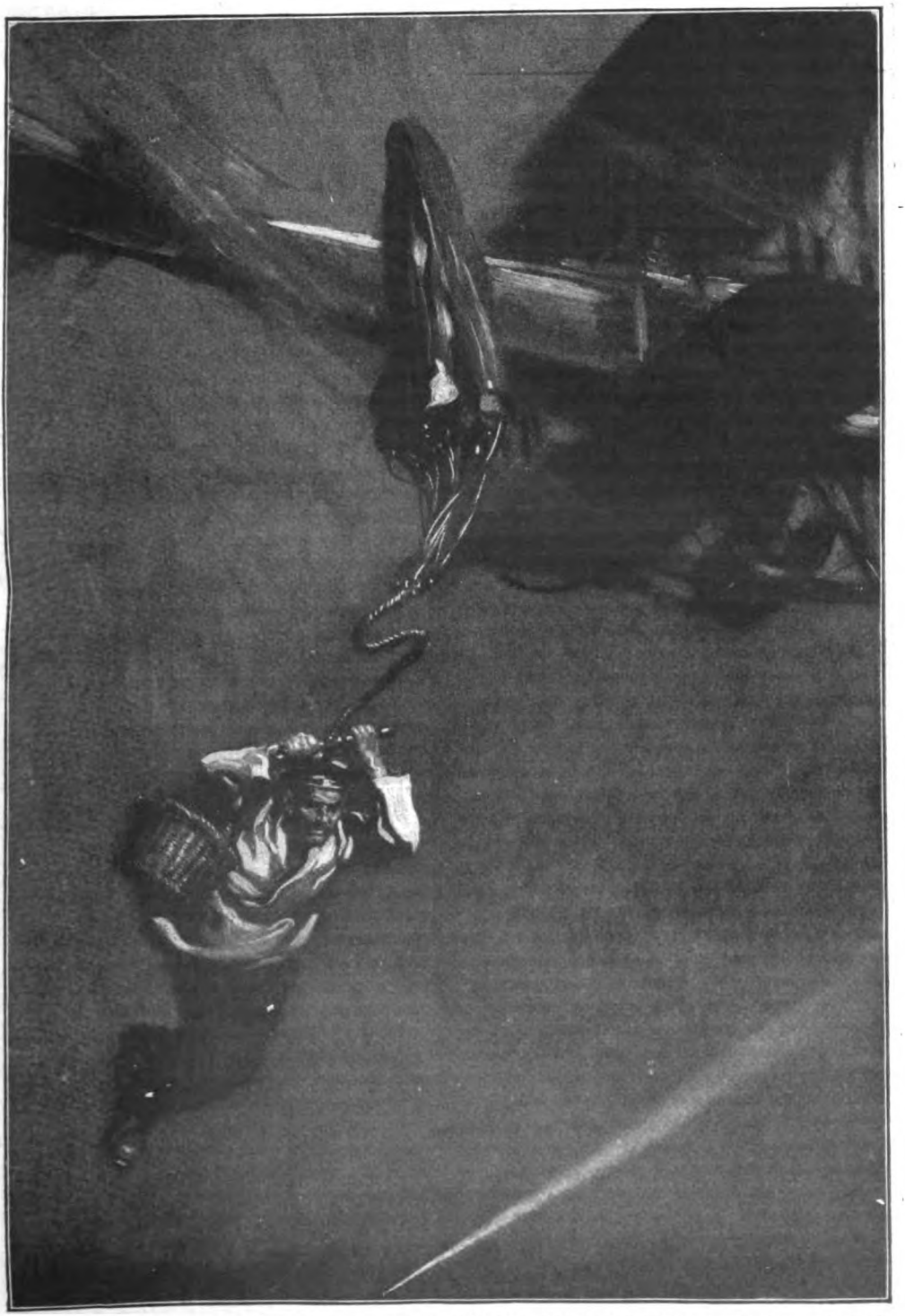
"For Heaven's sake, lady, dear," he said to the sister as I came in, "don't let anyone else in. Say I've had a relapse and am biting the bed-clothes. This unpleasant-looking man is a great pal of mine, and I would commune with him awhile."

"It's dreadful, old boy," he said to me as she went out of the room, "how they cluster. Men of dreadful visage; women who gave me my first bath; unprincipled journalists—all of them come and talk hot air until I get rid of them by swooning. Of course, my swoon is entirely artificial; but the sister is an understanding soul, and shoos them away." He lit a cigarette.

"I saw Petersen the other day in Hazebrouck," I told him as I sat down by the bed. "He wants to come round and see you as soon as he can get home."

"Good old Petersen. I'd never have brought it off without him."

"What happened, Jim?" I asked. "I've got up to the moment when you left his bus,



"WITH HIS BASKET UNDER HIS ARM, THAT FILTHY OLD BELGIAN FARMER LAUNCHED HIMSELF INTO SPACE."

with your old parachute, and disappeared into space. And of course I've seen the official announcement of the guns being seen in the river, as reported by that airman. But there is a gap of about three weeks; and I notice you have not been over communicative to the halfpenny Press."

"My dear old man," he answered, seriously, "there was nothing to be communicative about. Thinking it over now, I am astounded how simple the whole thing was. It was as easy as falling off a log. I fell like a stone for two or three seconds, because the blessed umbrella wouldn't open. Then I slowed up and floated gently downwards. It was a most fascinating sensation. I heard old Petersen crashing about just above me; and in the distance a searchlight was moving backwards and forwards across the sky, evidently looking for him. I should say it took me about five minutes to come down; and of course all the way down I was wondering where the devil I was going to land. The country below me was black as pitch: not a light to be seen—not a camp-fire—nothing. As the two things I wanted most to avoid were church steeples and the temporary abode of any large number of Huns, everything looked very favourable. To be suspended by one's trousers from a weathercock in the cold, grey light of dawn seemed a sorry ending to the show; and to land from the skies on a general's stomach requires explanation."

He smiled reminiscently. "I shall never forget that descent, Petersen's engine getting fainter and fainter in the distance, the first streaks of dawn beginning to show in the east, and away on a road to the south the headlights of a car moving swiftly along. Then the humour of the show struck me. Me, in my disguise, odoriferous as a family of ferrets in my borrowed garments, descending gently on the Hun like the fairy godmother in a pantomime. So I laughed, and—wished I hadn't. My knees hit my jaw with a crack, and I very nearly bit my tongue in two. Cheeses all over the place, and then I was enveloped in the folds of the collapsing parachute. Funny, but for a moment I couldn't think what had happened. I suppose I was a bit dizzy at the shock, and it never occurred to me that I'd reached the ground, which, owing to the darkness, I hadn't known was so close. Otherwise I could have landed much lighter. Yes, it's a great machine, that parachute." He paused to reach for his pipe.

"Where did you land?" I asked.

"In the middle of a ploughed field. Couldn't have been a better place if I'd chosen it. A wood or a river would have been deuced awkward. Yes, there's no doubt about it, old man, my luck was in from the very start. I extricated myself from the folds, picked up my cheeses, found a convenient ditch alongside to hide the umbrella in, and then sat tight waiting for dawn.

"I happen to know that part of Belgium pretty well, and when it got light I took my bearings. Petersen had borne a little south of what we intended, which was all to the good, as it gave me less walking; but it was just as well I found a sign-post almost at once, as I had no map, of course; far too dangerous, and I wasn't very clear on names of villages, though I'd memorized the map before leaving. I found I had landed somewhere south of Courtrai, and was about twelve kilometres due north of Tournai.

"It was just as I'd decided that little fact that I met a horrible Hun, a large and forbidding-looking man. Now, the one thing on which I'd been chancing my arm was the freedom allowed to the Belgians behind the German lines, and luck again stepped in.

"Beyond grunting 'Guten morgen' he betrayed no interest in me whatever. It was the same all along. I shambled past Uhlans, and officers and generals in motor-cars—Huns of all breeds and all varieties, and no one even noticed me. And after all, why on earth should they?

"About midday I came to Tournai; and here again I was trusting to luck. I'd stopped there three years ago at a small *estaminet* near the station kept by the widow Demassiet. Now this old lady was, I knew, thoroughly French in sympathies; and I hoped that she would pass me off as her brother from Ghent, who was staying with her for a while, in case of necessity. Some retreat of this sort was, of course, essential. A homeless vagabond would be bound to excite suspicion.

"Dear old woman—she was splendid. After the war I shall search her out, and present her with an annuity, or a *belle vache*, or something dear to the Belgian heart. She never even hesitated. From that night I was her brother, though she knew it meant her death as well as mine if I was discovered.

"'Ah, monsieur,' she said, when I pointed this out to her, 'it is in the hands of *le bon Dieu*. At the most I have another five years,

and these *Allemands*—pah!' She spat with great accuracy.

"But she was good, was the old *veuve* Demassiet."

Jim puffed steadily at his pipe in silence for a few moments.

"I soon found out that the Germans frequented the *estaminet;* and, what was more to the point—luck again, mark you—that the gunners who ran the battery I was out after almost lived there. When the battery was at Tournai they had mighty little to do, and they did it, with some skill, round the beer in her big room.

"I suppose you know what my plan was. The next time that battery left Tournai I proposed to cut one of the metals on the bridge over the River Scheldt, just in front of the engine, so close that the driver couldn't stop, and thus derail the locomotive. I calculated that if I cut the outside rail—the one nearest the parapet wall—the flange on the inner wheel would prevent the engine turning inwards, which would have caused delay, but very possibly no more. I hoped, *on the* contrary, to turn it outwards towards the wall, through which it would crash, dragging after it with any luck the whole train of guns.

"That being the general idea, so to speak, I wandered off one day to see the bridge. As I expected, it was guarded, but by a somewhat indifferent-looking Hun—evidently only lines of communication troops. For all that, I hadn't an idea how I was going to do it. Still, luck, always luck; the more you buffet her the better she treats you.

"One week after I got there I heard the battery was going out: and they were going out that night. As a matter of fact, that hadn't occurred to me before—the fact of them moving by night, but it suited me down to the ground. It appeared they were timed to leave at midnight, which meant they'd cross the bridge about a quarter or half past. And so at nine that evening I pushed gently off and wandered bridgewards.

"Then the fun began. I was challenged, and, having answered thickly, I pretended to be drunk. The sentry, poor devil, wasn't a bad fellow, and I had some cold sausage and beer. And very soon a gurgling noise pronounced the fact that he found my beer good.

"It was then I hit him on the base of his skull with a bit of gas-pipe. That sentry will never drink beer again." Brent frowned. "A nasty blow, a dirty blow, but a necessary blow." He shrugged his shoulders and then went on.

"I took off his top-coat and put it on. I put on his hat and took his rifle and rolled him down the embankment into a bush. Then I resumed his beat. Discipline was a bit lax on that bridge, I'm glad to say; unless you pulled your relief out of bed no one else was likely to do it for you. As you may guess, I did not do much pulling.

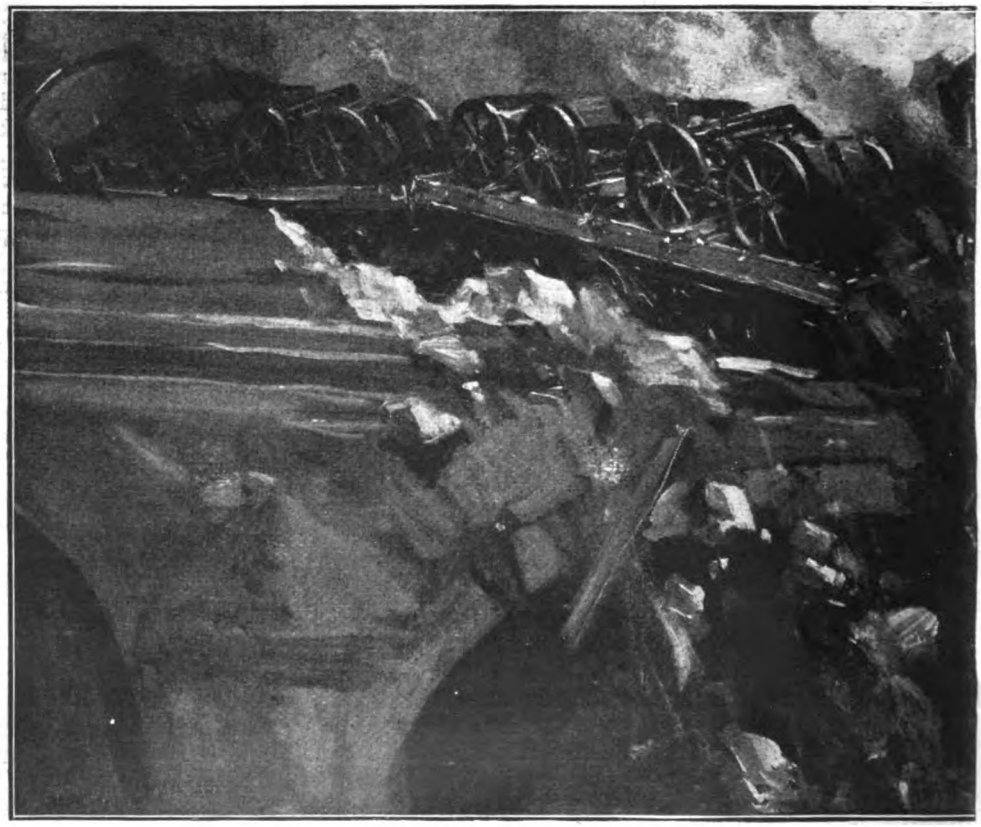
"I was using two slabs of gun-cotton to make sure—firing them electrically. I had two dry-cells and two coils of fine wire for the leads. The cells would fire a No. 13 Detonator through thirty yards of those leads—and that thirty yards just enabled me to stand clear of the bridge. It took me twenty minutes to fix it up, and then I had to wait.

"By gad, old boy, you've called me a cool bird; you should have seen me during that wait. I was trembling like a child with excitement: everything had gone so marvellously. And for the first time in the whole show it dawned on me that not only was there a chance of getting away afterwards, but that I actually wanted to. Before that moment I'd assumed on the certainty of being killed."

For a moment he looked curiously, introspectively, in front of him. Then suddenly, and apropos of nothing, he remarked, "Kathleen Goring tea'd with me yesterday. Of course, it was largely due to that infernal orange-skin, but I—er—did not pass a sleepless night."

Which I took to be indicative of a state of mind induced by the rind of that nutritious fruit, rather than any reference to his broken leg. For when a man has passed unscathed through parachute descents and little things like that, only to lose badly on points to a piece of peel, his sense of humour gets a jog in a crucial place. And a sense of humour is fatal to a hopeless, undying passion. It is almost as fatal, in fact, as a hiccough at the wrong moment.

"It was just about half-past twelve that the train came along. I was standing by the end of the bridge, with my overcoat and rifle showing in the fitful light of the moon. The engine-driver waved his arm and shouted something in greeting and I waved back. Then I took the one free lead and waited until the engine was past me. I could see the first of the guns, just coming abreast, and at that moment I connected up with the battery in my pocket. Two slabs of gun-cotton make a noise, as you know, and just as the engine



"THE ENGINE CRASHED THROUGH THE PARAPET WALL AND HUNG FOR A

reached the charge, a sheet of flame seemed to leap from underneath the front wheels. The driver hadn't time to do a thing—the engine had left the rails before he knew what had happened. And then things moved. In my wildest moments I had never expected such a success. The engine crashed through the parapet wall and hung for a moment in space. Then it fell downward into the water, and by the mercy of Allah the couplings held. The first two guns followed it, through the gap it had made, and then the others overturned with the pull before they got there, smashing down the wall the whole way along. Every single gun went wallop into the Scheldt —to say nothing of two passenger carriages containing the gunners and their officers. The whole thing was over in five seconds; and it's no exaggeration to say that before the last gun hit the water yours truly had cast away his regalia of office and was legging it like a two-year-old back to the *veuve* Demassiet and Tournai. It struck me that bridge might shortly become an unhealthy spot."

Jim Brent laughed. "It did. I had to stop on with the old lady for two or three days in case she might be suspected owing to my sudden departure—and things hummed. They shot the *feld webel* in charge of the guard; they shot every sentry; they shot everybody they could think of; but—they never even suspected me. I went out and had a look next day, the day I think that R.F.C. man spotted and reported the damage. Two of the guns were only fit for turning into hairpins, and the other four looked very like the morning after.

"Then, after I'd waited a couple of days, I said good-bye to the old dear and trekked off towards the Dutch frontier, gaining immense popularity, my dear old son, by describing the accident to all the soldiers I met.

"That's all, I think. I had words with a sentry at the frontier, but I put it across him with his own bundook. Then I wandered to our Ambassador, and sailed for England in due course. And—er—that's that."

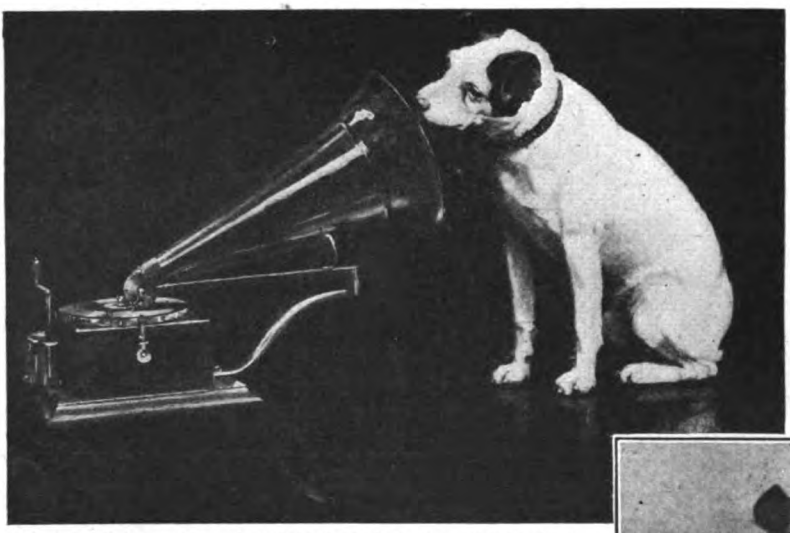
MOMENT IN SPACE. THEN IT FELL DOWNWARD INTO THE WATER."

Such is the tale of Jim Brent's V.C. There only remains for me to give the wording of his official report on the matter.

"I have the honour to report," it ran, "that at midnight on the 25th ult., I successfully derailed the train conveying six guns of calibre estimated at about 9-inch, each mounted on a railway truck. The engine, followed by the guns, departed from sight in about five seconds, and fell through a drop of some sixty feet into the River Scheldt from the bridge just west of Tournai. The gunners and officers—who were in two coaches in rear—were also killed. Only one seemed aware that there was danger, and he, owing to his bulk, seemed unable to get out of the door of his carriage. He was, I think, in command. I investigated the damage next day when the military authorities were a little calmer, and beg to state that I do not consider the guns have been improved by their immersion. One, at least, has disappeared in the mud. A large number of Germans who had no connection with this affair have, I am glad to report, since been shot for it.

"I regret that I am unable to report in person, but I am at present in hospital with a broken leg, sustained by my inadvertently stepping on a piece of orange-peel, which escaped my notice owing to its remarkable similarity to the surrounding terrain. This similarity was doubtless due to the dirt on the orange-peel."

Which, I may say, should not be taken as a model for official reports by the uninitiated.



MR. FRANCIS BARRAUD'S WORLD-FAMOUS PAINTING, "HIS MASTER'S VOICE."

"HIS MASTER'S VOICE."

HOW NIPPER BECAME WORLD-FAMOUS.

By FRANCIS BARRAUD,

CREATOR OF THE ORIGINAL PICTURE.

The above trade-mark and the following cartoons originating therefrom are reproduced by permission of the Gramophone Company, Ltd., Hayes, Middlesex.

By courtesy of] [*Barnforth & Co., Holmfirth.*

A STORY WITHOUT WORDS!

NIPPER, THE DOG USED AS THE MODEL FOR THE PICTURE.

From a Photograph.

I THINK I am safe in saying that everyone in any civilized part of the world knows the little dog looking into the trumpet and listening to "His Master's Voice," so perhaps I may be forgiven for telling the public in these columns something about Nipper, the original model.

I painted the picture before I had ever heard of the Gramophone Company, and the instrument which appeared in it was a talking machine of nondescript type. I called it "His

By courtesy of] [*the "Westminster Gazette."*

MR. BALFOUR LISTENS TO "HIS MASTER'S VOICE."

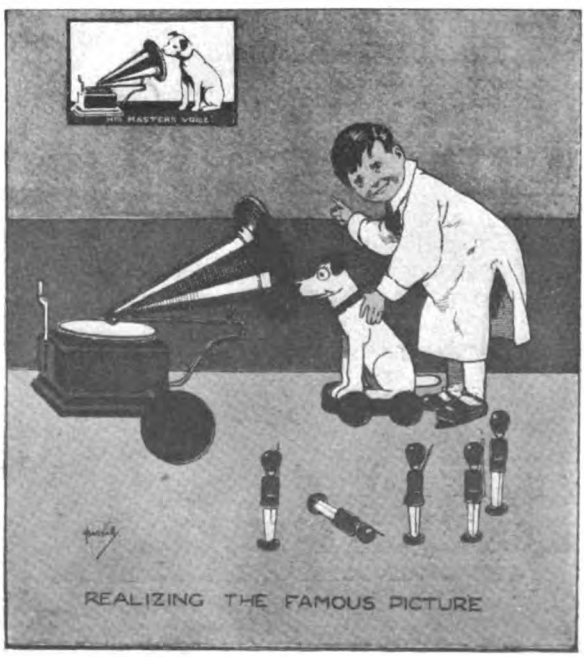
Master's Voice" and showed it to several publishers, as I thought there would be a demand for it as a reproduction. These gentlemen, however, were not of the same opinion; one well-known man objected on the score that no one would know what the dog was doing. Another very generous and venturesome publisher offered me five pounds for it, but I was not tempted.

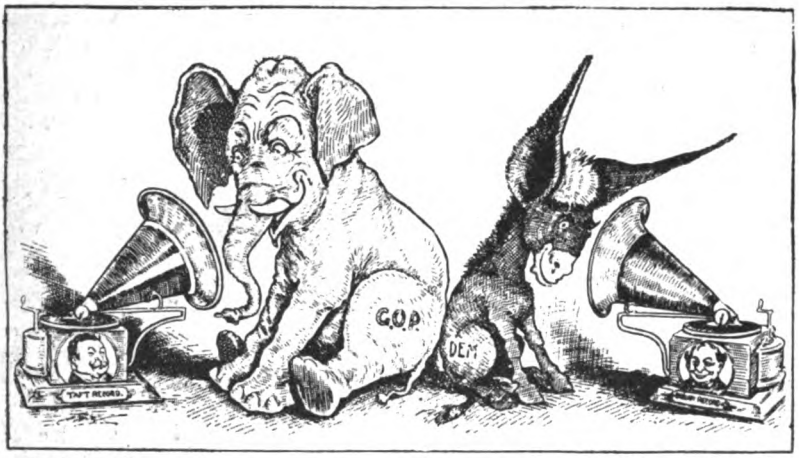
Meantime, I was thinking of improvements; I was not satisfied with the trumpet I had painted. It was black and ugly, and I wanted something more pictorial. One day a friend of mine suggested I should call on the Gramophone Company and ask them to lend me a brass horn to paint from; so, armed with a small photograph of my oil-painting, I paid them a visit at their offices, which were then in Maiden Lane. To a gentleman I saw there I explained what I required and showed him the photograph. He asked at once if he might show it to the manager, Mr. Barry Owen. I agreed. Mr. Owen shortly came out and asked me if the picture was for sale and whether I could introduce a machine of their own make, a gramophone, instead of the one in the picture. I replied that the picture was for sale and I could make the alteration if they would let me have an instrument to paint from.

The change was made and the picture was bought from me. I then advised the Gramophone Company not to make it an obvious advertisement by putting their name across the background, but to leave it without any lettering and merely give it the title I had already suggested, viz., "His Master's Voice." I pointed out that the subject spoke for itself and required no explanation.

The picture has lent itself in an extraordinary way to political skits, a selection of which is reproduced in these pages. I have a scrap-book with quite forty or more, and fresh ones appear almost monthly in the Press in most countries on earth. One favourite way of burlesquing it is to make the dog seem to be smelling a bottle of whisky, the title being misspelt "His Master's Vice."

Nipper, the original living dog, belonged to my brother Mark, who was scenic artist at Bristol for many years. He never left my





By courtesy of] ["*Minneapolis Journal.*"

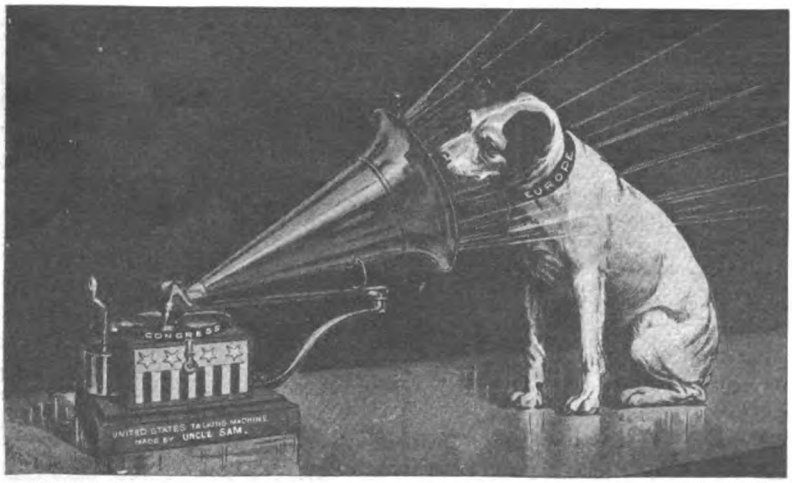
AMERICAN CARTOONISTS HAVE NOT BEEN SLOW TO AVAIL THEMSELVES OF THE IDEA.

brother's heels; when Mark took his "call" for a transformation scene, Nipper always followed him on to the stage. When my brother died, Nipper attached himself to me, and I had him for many years. He is now dead.

I heard a very sad story of another little dog who, alas! resembled Nipper too closely. No doubt he was proud of the fact, but it was his undoing. An enterprising gramophone dealer abroad (I am glad it was abroad—let us hope it was somewhere in Germany) saw the dog and was struck by the strong likeness. He sought out the animal's master and tempted him with gold; Nipper's double and his owner parted company. Not for long did the poor little chap pose as Nipper—at least, not *alive*—although he continued his impersonation much longer than he could ever have expected to. His new master poisoned him, stuffed him, and placed him in a shop window in Nipper's famous listening position in front of a gramophone.

By courtesy of] ["*A. M. Davis.*

"HIS MASTER'S VOICE."



By courtesy of] ["*Judge.*"

ANOTHER AMERICAN VERSION, THE "MASTER" IN THIS CASE BEING MR. ROOSEVELT.

The ordinary man in the street is always interested in the little listening fox-terrier. Some London enthusiast had acquired, to his delight, a dog

By courtesy of ["London Opinion."

"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"—AS HEARD IN GREECE.

resembling Nipper and cherished him for some years. On the dog's death his master's enthusiasm actually impelled him to get Rowland Ward, the famous Piccadilly naturalist firm, to stuff his pet in "listening" posture. The animal has since been acquired by the Gramophone Company.

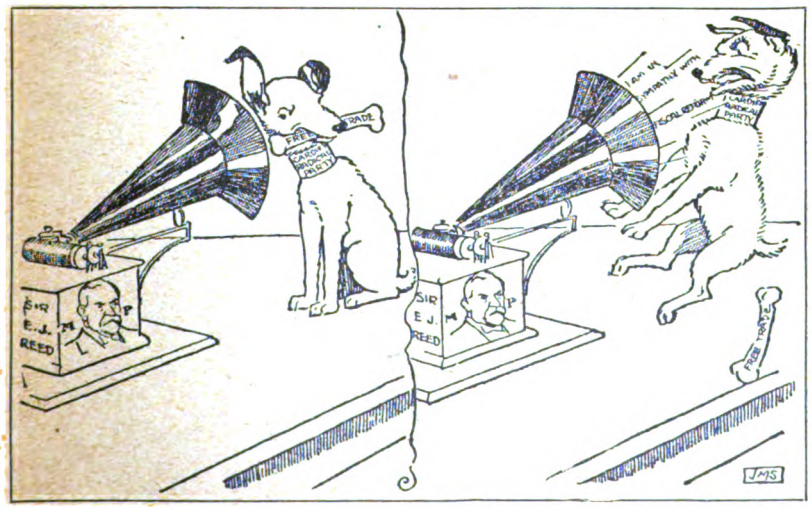
Nipper was a splendid subject to play practical jokes on. One that never failed was to put a very realistic reproduction of a cat, which was cut out in cardboard, sitting up in his basket. He was always taken in and rushed madly at it, but, of course, it fell flat (I mean the cat, not the joke), and I suppose to him it disappeared as if by magic. He was taken in over and over again. It always interested me, because it proved to me that a realistic bit of painting does appear real to a dog. I have heard many people contend that a picture would only appear a flat surface to an animal, but I don't think, after this experiment, that is the case.

By courtesy of [*Bamforth & Co., Holmfirth.*

HIS MASTER'S VICE.

Another favourite joke was to give him some soda-water in a saucer; he would go to drink it, when it would fizz. This annoyed him fearfully and he barked madly at it, but went on having sips, or rather laps, until he had finished it.

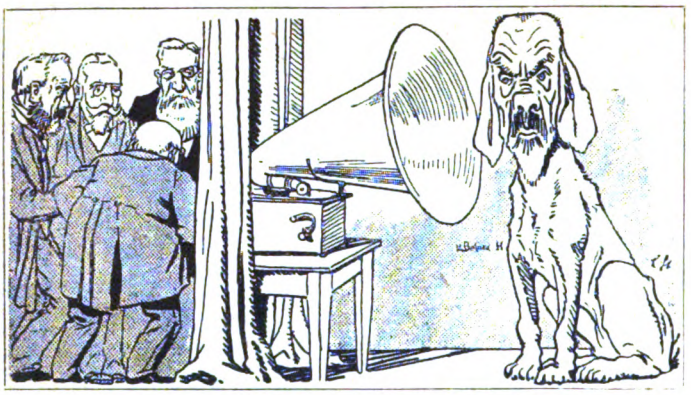
Nipper was a good judge of character. I remember on one occasion a Bohemian friend of mine called and wanted me to go for a walk. I was unable to leave my work, so he proposed taking Nipper. I laughed at the idea, as



By courtesy of ["Western Mail."

"HIS MASTER'S VOICE."

THE PUP: "Really, I do wish he would speak!" "Crikey! but not talk of that kind."



"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"—AS HEARD IN GERMANY.

picture of "His Master's Voice" which hangs in the board-room. He also stated that from first to last over a million pounds had been spent in reproducing it. If Nipper only knew that, he would wag his little stumpy tail so proudly! He did not know how he was going to be handed down to posterity. No more did I.

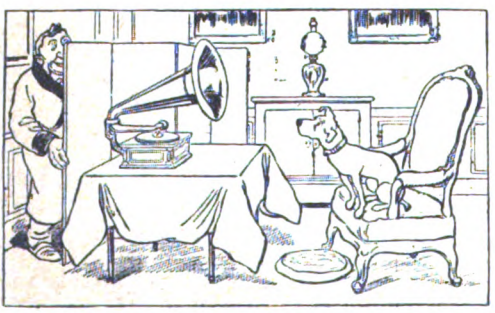
Nipper bids fair to go on listening into the ages.

Nipper would never follow anyone but myself, or, at any rate, a member of the family. However, much to my astonishment, he went with little persuasion, and returned in about an hour's time with my friend. I found that the "walk" had been a series of visits to places of refreshment in the neighbourhood, where Nipper was well aware that by sitting up on his hind legs he was sure to be plentifully fed with biscuits. I was fond of chaffing my friend by telling him that Nipper had summed him up in a minute and foresaw the kind of walk he was likely to have.

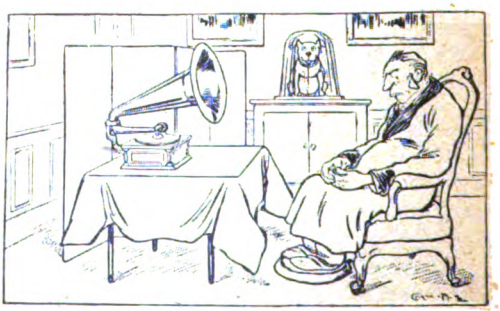
Mr. Alfred Clark, the managing director of the Gramophone Company, told a friend of mine that it might interest me to know that out at their head offices and factories at Hayes, Middlesex, they have frequent fire-drill practice; should an actual conflagration take place, the firemen have instructions that the first thing to be saved is the original

NIPPER IN INDIA.

An advertisement in Hindustani announcing that a number of new records are on sale at three rupees each.



"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"



Drawn by Caran d'Ache [*for "Le Journal."*

and—ten years later—

"HIS DOG'S VOICE."

In the Hour of Fear.

By M. F. HUTCHINSON.

Illustrated by Cyrus Cuneo.

IT was not quite six o'clock in the morning when Mr. Justice Meredon came out of the hotel on the cliffs, above Trescanon, and walked along a winding, picturesque path to a favourite spot.

He was on his way to a little stone shelter, quite two miles from the hotel, once used by the coastguard as a look-out point; it lay in the opposite direction to the favourite golf-links, and never once had this visitor, who loved quiet, met any human being there. Greatly he had enjoyed hours spent there looking out over the glorious and varied sweep of the coast-line, the wide stretch of sea, reading, thinking, and sometimes dreaming. His mind was tuned to the anticipation of quiet pleasure when a discovery jarred his feeling of satisfaction—the paper-backed volume under his arm was not a copy of the *Modern Review*, but a magazine devoted chiefly to fiction. The stories in it were undeniably clever, but in the current issue one had caused Mr. Justice Meredon some distinct annoyance. It had been the subject of a smoking-room conversation the night before; men engaged in an ardent argument had relapsed into silence when the alert, youthful figure of the Judge had been noticed entering the lighted room from the darkness of a wide balcony without.

The story was one of a murder, and concerned not so much with the criminal in the dock, but described the sufferings of a judge who recognized in the prisoner one whom he had known as a young and charming girl, a favourite visitor at his mother's house.

Yes, the story had annoyed Mr. Justice Meredon. The judge on the bench had the clearest of duties before him, and must consider only the right administration of the law; his private feelings were of no account. Meredon felt much inclined to throw the offending publication over the edge of the cliff, an impetuous, youthful action—but he was sometimes conscious of such irritating and unbecoming impulses—and then decided to leave the magazine on the bench in the little shelter towards which he was directing his steps.

When the Judge reached the quaint little place, built of big stone slabs, he found someone there before him. Someone—surely, a child?—so small and slim was the figure wrapped in a big cloak and stretched on the old worn bench. He cleared his throat, the sensation of annoyance deepening within him. He liked to rest after the walk over the cliffs.

The figure did not move. The feeling of annoyance changed to one of embarrassment for he saw the back of a dark head—someone was lying face downwards there. Someone undoubtedly ill, sad, or troubled. Perhaps a child sobbing out youthful woes! Then the stillness of the figure frightened him a little. Deliberately he put the magazine down on the grass, his stick beside it, and then went into the shelter and touched the figure lying there very gently on the shoulder. The delicate pressure of his fingers was, for some moments, quite unnoticed. A white face was raised, and two eyes, pathetically wistful, glanced up at the tall, grey-headed man.

"My dear child," said the Judge, gently, "is anything the matter?" A shiver, followed by a sob, answered him. The figure moved suddenly, sat erect, and the enveloping coat slipped open.

Judge Meredon looked into the tragic face of a woman clad in a shimmering evening gown, its gauzy elaborateness hidden by the heavy, fur-lined coat. Dark hair, falling loosely about a thin face, added to the impression of intense pallor, of utter weariness.

"I beg your pardon," exclaimed the man. The words were quite useless, foolishly ineffectual, but what else could he say as he wished he had not entered the shelter?

She looked up at him. "I have been here all night. I went to sleep and forgot everything. I often come here!"

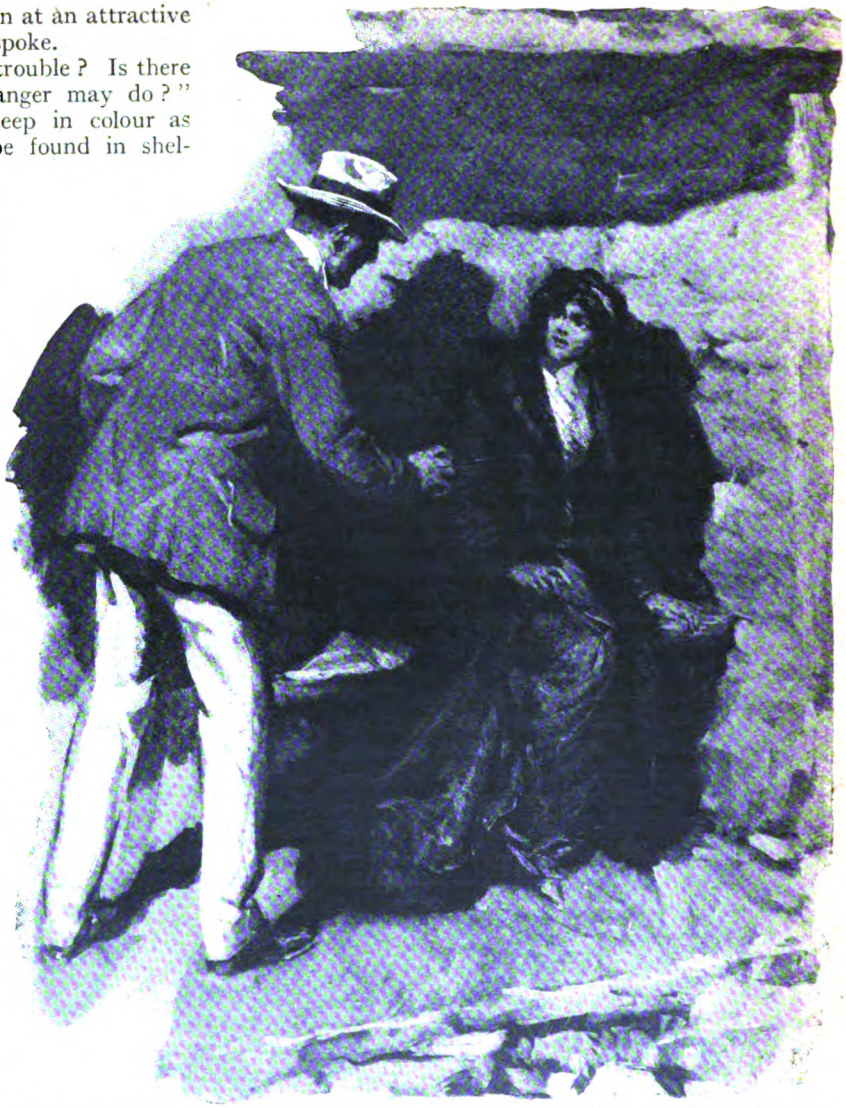
The Judge was in a dilemma. Should he turn away at once from the place that had been such a haven of quiet to a busy man?

He glanced again at an attractive face, and then spoke.

"Are you in trouble? Is there anything a stranger may do?" Her eyes, as deep in colour as the violets to be found in sheltered corners on the Cornish cliffs, searched his face. She sighed like a child who has found unexpected comfort, and sat down on the bench, drawing a hood fastened to the coat over her head, and thus, unconsciously, adding to the pathos of her appearance.

"I come here for peace," she said, simply, "because I am often so very tired."

"But you might take cold. Surely, it is an unwise proceeding?" Her eyes met his for the second time; he interpreted their expression correctly; colds and slight ailments did not come within the scope of her consideration.



"SHE LOOKED UP AT HIM. 'I HAVE BEEN HERE ALL NIGHT. I WENT TO SLEEP AND FORGOT EVERYTHING.'"

"I come here for—courage!"

"But," said the Judge, "surely there is someone who can help you — take care of you?"

Tears gathered, and rolled slowly and steadily down her cheeks.

"Please," she gasped, "don't be so sorry. You know nothing about me, but I am glad you spoke to me, for I have sometimes thought all the goodness and chivalry in the world were dead."

"But," asserted the kind-hearted gentleman, "anyone would be sorry to think of a lady, as young and frail as you, spending a night out here on the cliffs. You should not do it."

"Oh, don't say that! No one comes here at night; they would be afraid of the loneliness and the silence I love; but I come because I think I am beyond ordinary fears. The silence comforts me." A faint smile quivered on her lips. "We are strangers, but you have comforted me, too; something in your face makes me feel so safe. We shall never meet again, and so, because I have felt lonely, desolate, and hopeless, may I tell you my trouble? Do you care to hear?"

Colour rushed into the face that a sad-eyed woman declared had given her comfort.

"If only I might do something to help you!" Mr. Justice Meredon removed his hat and sat down on the bench by the side of the slight figure in the big coat.

"But you do help me. I don't know how to explain it, but there is something in your face that gives me a curious feeling of safety. Fear could not master me in your presence. And now I want to talk to you. May I?"

The man was too moved to be able to answer in words, but she understood his silence and interpreted it correctly.

"Thank you. I came here some hours ago feeling that I could not bear my life any longer — was in desperate need of comfort. I was married at seventeen, married to a man who has found me nothing but a disappointment. And sometimes—sometimes this makes him cruel." The speaker slipped back the loose sleeves of her coat and showed to the shocked eyes of the man at her side two frail arms marked and cruelly scarred. "Last night," added the wistful voice, "he told me I was dull, nothing but a thing of stone, and strapped me to a chair. At midnight a servant found me—and—and—I escaped out here."

"The brute," exclaimed the Judge, in a tone that would have amazed those who knew him best. "The brute! He deserves shooting for such cowardice. You cannot stay with him. Leave him at once. Where are your friends?"

She looked out across the quiet sea before she spoke again.

"I often say I cannot bear it, but I must. He is my husband. I married him for better, for worse. His cruelty arises partly from—from—his indulgence in drink; the day may come when no one would care for him as I should. When he is ill he needs me, calls for me, begs me, sometimes, to help him fight the demon that possesses him. Ah, have I been wrong to tell you all this? You don't know his name, but just to tell you the truth has comforted me; you can't understand how it has comforted me."

The Judge pressed his lips into a hard, firm line.

"I must go back, and not shrink. So far, no one has ever seen me leave the house at night or re-enter it. There is an outer emergency staircase quite close to one of the balconies outside the windows of my room; I can reach it easily, and it is my way of escape, not only from suffering, but from dreadful thoughts that pursue me, whispers of what I might do. But when I am here I learn to be patient; I learn to endure. I forget all the horrible pursuing thoughts—my own protests, entreaties, and threats; for I possess a revolver and have said I would protect myself with it. That," she added, softly, "was dreadful of me, wasn't it?"

"Dreadful?" repeated the Judge, "dreadful? I cannot see how you have submitted to such cruel treatment. No woman should bear such a life."

"Sometimes"—she almost whispered the words—"I wonder what the end of it all will be. I like to sit here and look up at the stars and hope that in some other world an easier task will be given me. There are hours when I feel I cannot bear my life any longer, and thoughts and possibilities torment me—hours of despair. Now I shall have something to remember when I fancy that goodness and chivalry are dead; then I shall think of the stranger—ah, no; don't tell me your name—the stranger with the kind, strong face that makes a tormented woman feel safe, and almost like a child of whom care is taken."

"And I shall remember, too," answered the man, the note of strong emotion revealing itself in his voice. "But won't you listen to me? May I not give you practical help or advice?"

"You cannot, indeed you cannot. I must return to my husband and try to be patient. It is meeting you here, and like this, that has unsealed my lips. And now I must go. Good-bye, kind stranger, good-bye."

"It is not safe for you to creep out of your own house in the dark. How shall I be able to bear the thought of such sufferings as yours, and to know that I cannot do anything at all?"

"Ah, please don't make me sorry that I told you everything. You have given me fresh courage."

With a simple, child-like gesture she placed her cold hand in his strong one. The Judge, never at a loss for a word, the right word of a brilliant speaker, could not, at first, find anything to say. And then he knew that he could not let her go without asking a question.

"Forgive me, but tell me one thing! Are you often forced to come here to find the courage you must need so sorely? Indeed, I must know."

Slowly she shook her head. "It has happened that I have come here two or three times in a week, and then not for months together. My husband is away a great deal, often for many, many weeks at a time."

"And you are left here alone? Don't you know where he goes and what he does? This might give you your way of escape." Two patches of crimson colour showed on the Judge's cheeks as he met the gaze of her eyes, those innocent eyes.

"I know nothing; I do not want to know. Sometimes I guess many things, dreadful things; but I have told you what I think is my duty. And I have learned it here in this quiet place of peace, where, also, I have met a friend."

Again she smiled at him, and then passed round the side of the shelter and out of his sight. The man sat down on the bench and looked out to sea with stern eyes and firmly-set lips, remembering regretfully that he was leaving Trescanon before the middle of the day. Minutes passed before he realized that the woman he had met in this strange fashion and who had trusted him did not wish him to know her name. They would never meet again; he would never be able to do anything for her.

Four years passed by, bringing to Mr. Justice Meredon much hard work, which he loved, and a good deal of the world's praise.

The year 19—, as the autumn approached, found many people in the grip of a curious form of influenza which had all the characteristics of Asiatic fever and ague. The epidemic had its victims in every rank of society; rich and poor suffered alike. It became necessary for one of the Judges of the King's Bench, the Hon. Sir Fraser Linnell, to undertake part of the western circuit alone. After the opening of the Assizes at Bodmin, a disconcerting telegram was received announcing the Judge's sudden illness and asking if anyone could take his place.

So it came to pass that Mr. Justice Meredon departed, hastily, to the help of his learned brother. In the train he frowned over the newspapers which were prepared to make a great deal out of a murder case to be tried at Bodmin, and what they chose to describe as the sensational illness of the Judge.

A woman was on her trial for murder.

Mr. Justice Meredon knew the bare facts. She was said to have shot her husband while he lay asleep; a revolver, with the wife's initials upon it, was picked up on the floor of the room. Persistently, since the inquest, the accused person declared her innocence. This murdered man was wealthy, Henry Desterre by name, and a member of a well-known family. Celebrated counsel were engaged in the case.

Next morning, when Mr. Justice Meredon entered the cowded court, there was something in the general atmosphere that instantly impressed his trained senses as unusual. The Clerk of Arraigns had no need to command silence, there was not so much as the faintest hum of excitement. Every eye in the court remained fixed on the imposing figure of the Judge; he was aware, also, that the members of the jury concentrated attention upon him; the distinguished counsel, their juniors, and the busy solicitors looked, with one accord, directly towards him as if they would never glance in any other direction.

And yet the prisoner was in the dock.

When the eyes of the Judge glanced in that direction he understood the attitude of the court. A frail figure stood there, a woman with a wistful face, and her eyes, dark with suffering and silent appeal, were fixed upon him.

Mr Justice Meredon averted his gaze, looking down on the papers before him; but in the hushed court, the air of which was tense with emotion, his sudden pallor was instantly observed.

The splendid figure in grey wig and scarlet robes was that of a human being suffering as the Judge had never suffered before.

The woman in the dock was the one he had met in the stone shelter on Trescanon Cliffs.

For a few moments he did not hear the grave measured tones of the counsel for the prosecution opening the case, only a wistful, faltering voice that spoke of the comfort he had given; and just as clearly memory presented for his contemplation words he had uttered. Had he not said that the man who could thus torture and torment a woman deserved shooting?

The pen in the hand of the Judge made aimless marks on a clear sheet of paper.

During four long years the woman, who had spoken so pathetically of patience, had endured. Had the strange meeting in the early hours of a perfect summer day lingered as persistently in her memory as it had in his? The man, who prided himself on his powers of self-control, his victory over feelings of personal sentiment, was racked by anguished thought. What measure of guilt rested upon him? Had the frail woman in the dock remembered his words, dwelt upon them until they had become the keystone on which she constructed a way of escape, then, at last, in an hour of despair, such thoughts might have impelled action?

"SHE HAD SPOKEN IN A PERFECTLY DEAD VOICE, AND ONLY AFTER A KINDLY-FACED WARDRESS HAD TOUCHED HER GENTLY ON THE SHOULDER."

two words uttered by the prisoner in the dock, "Not Guilty!" She had spoken in a perfectly dead voice, and only after a kindly-faced wardress had touched her gently on the shoulder.

The counsel for the prosecution was perfectly aware of the emotion to be seen on the face above him, usually so imperturbable; but he, himself, and everyone else in the thronged court, was under the same sway. He was doing his utmost to banish it from his own heart and voice. But not a trace of this painful feeling had been heard in the

The clear voice of the counsel for the prosecution seemed to prove by quietly-uttered facts that Eleanor Norton Desterre was guilty of shooting her husband while he lay in bed asleep. He schooled his utterance

successfully, and forced himself to do his duty. His witnesses, though they spoke with manifest reluctance, were reliable and trustworthy persons.

A man-servant, James Carton by name, answered the questions put to him with quivering lips, his hands clinging to the woodwork in front of him.

"You had been in the service of Mr. Desterre for many years?"

"Yes."

"Acted as his valet before his marriage?"

"Yes."

"But at Trescanon Vale House there was only a small establishment and no other man-servant but yourself?"

"Yes."

"Mr. Desterre kept no horses there, no groom to look after them?"

"Only a motor-car."

"Where did the chauffeur live?"

"He slept in a room above the coach-house which had been turned into a garage, but had his meals in the house."

"On the night of the murder you accompanied your master to his room?"

"Yes."

"He was not in good health, and in the doctor's hands?"

"Yes."

"Tell us what happened."

"My master was very drowsy, and fell asleep immediately. My mistress came into the room and told me to go to bed."

"You refer to the prisoner?"

"Yes."

"Why did she give you that order?"

"Because she was always kind and considerate, sir. The doctor had ordered my master to take a draught, at night, and if he woke it was to be given him. My mistress said she would give it to him herself."

Everyone in the court realized the reluctance of this witness, his utter inability to speak of one who had been invariably kind to him by the cruel name *prisoner*. He was allowed to give his answers in his own way.

"What happened?"

"I went to my room, sir."

"Your room was close to your master's?"

"It was farther down the passage on the opposite side."

"The prisoner occupied a room at the other end of the house on the same floor?"

"Yes, sir."

"Tell us what disturbed you."

"The sound of a door closing."

"What did you do?"

"I jumped up, went out into the passage, and listened. I heard distinctly the voice of my master; he was talking and muttering in his sleep."

"Were you alone on the landing?"

"My wife had heard the noise. She came along the passage towards me."

"What did she do?"

"Went into Mr. Desterre's room expecting to find our mistress there."

"Did she?"

"No."

"What did she see?"

"Mr. Desterre was lying on his back muttering a little."

"Had the draught been taken?"

"No."

"What did you do?"

"We talked a little on the landing."

"Did you see anything?"

"We both saw the door of our mistress's room open and then close."

"What time was this?"

"The clock struck one."

"What did you do?"

"My wife went back to her room, and I lay down on my bed, leaving the door open."

"Neither of you stayed with the sick man?"

"We both thought our mistress was waiting to return to the room."

"You went to sleep?"

"Yes."

"When did you wake?"

"At four o'clock in the morning."

"Was the door of your room open as you had left it?"

"No, it was closed."

"You went out on the landing?"

"Yes. The door of my master's room was shut."

"You opened it?"

"Yes."

"What did you find?"

"My master lying on his right side shot through the head."

"What did you do?"

"I ran out of the room, calling loudly."

"Who came to you?"

"My wife, and in a few minutes the two maids."

"You saw a revolver?"

"On the floor close to the bed."

"What did your wife do?"

"She ran down the passage and knocked at the door of my mistress's room."

"Did she enter?"

"No, the door was locked. She knocked many times."

"What did you do then?"

"We tried to get into the room, afraid that something might have been done to our mistress."

"You did not succeed?"

"No."

"And then you thought of the police? Did you go yourself?"

"We rang the stable-bell, and as soon as the chauffeur came sent him for the police and for the doctor."

"Your wife went back to the locked door? What happened?"

"My mistress opened it."

"At once?"

"Immediately."

"How was she dressed? Tell us that first."

"She had on a thick motoring coat over her evening dress."

"You swear it was not a dressing-gown?"

"Yes."

"What did she say?"

"'What is it?' That was all."

"Did your wife tell her the dreadful truth?"

"Yes."

"What did the prisoner then do?"

"My mistress fainted, sir."

"When you went to ring the stable-bell you found the house locked up as usual?"

"Yes."

"No door or window open?"

On and on came the quietly-asked questions, the reluctant answers. Now and again the Judge, listening intently, glanced at the face of the keen and eager counsel for the defence, looked with something like hope in his eyes when the opportunity for cross-examination came. He only tried to shake the testimony of James Carton on one point—his absolute certainty as to the fastening of all doors and windows for the night.

"There was an outer staircase?"

"Yes."

"Where is the door connected with this?"

"At the end of the passage, sir, close to the room occupied by my mistress."

Photographs were handed up to the jury.

"That door could have been opened?"

"No. The bolts were rusted, the key long lost."

"Your mistress always slept in the room with the balconies."

"She was fond of it and would not give it up."

"Had any attempt been made to get her to do this?"

"Yes, many times. My master often suggested another room, as he thought that end of the house damp."

"But his wife would not listen. Was she a lady determined to have her own way?"

"Oh, no, sir. She was very gentle and kind."

"But on one point she was firm—her liking for her room?"

"Yes."

"What did your master say to this?"

"He was angry."

"What did he intend to do with the room?"

"He said he would sleep in it himself."

"But he had declared it damp?"

Further questions elicited from the witness the fact that the windows of the room occupied by Mrs. Desterre had three balconies, one of which was only separated from the emergency staircase by a distance of two feet. Again photographs were passed up to the jury and carefully examined by them.

James Carton agreed, most eagerly, with his questioner that it would be by no means difficult for anyone to climb from the side balcony on to the iron staircase. It was with evident reluctance he admitted that he was not aware his mistress had ever been in the habit of making use of the outer stairs. Neither could he say that traces of footsteps had been seen there at any time. The constables examined the staircase when they reached the house, but rain had then begun to fall heavily.

The Judge looked at the members of the jury; surely he could read incredulity on their honest faces? Why should a lady climb from a balcony to an outer staircase, when she felt inclined for fresh air, and especially at night? He longed, for a moment, to throw off the signs of his dignified office and demand to be placed in the witness-box, and there state facts as he knew them. Invisible but powerful chains, the chains of duty, held him inexorably; but even had he not had the dignity of a high office to maintain there were other difficulties. A statement of a meeting in the early hours of the morning with Mrs. Desterre in a rough stone shelter would prove, not merely that she had been in the habit of leaving her room at night when trouble threatened to master her, but also a motive for the murder—the sufferings of a tortured wife.

The evidence of Mrs. Carton tallied in every particular with that of her husband. More than once tears streamed from her eyes as she spoke of the gentle mistress she had served. From her Mr. Delliter, for the defence, elicited that when, at one o'clock, the door of Mrs. Desterre's room opened

and then closed it was surprising she had not come out and spoken to them; and she wept copiously as she was obliged to say that they saw nothing, certainly not the face of any stranger. The passage was dimly lighted. She also spoke of the affection her mistress had for the room with the balconies, and her refusal to change it for another.

As the painful case wore on the Judge realized that the line to be taken by the defence was almost child-like in its simplicity. Mrs. Desterre had not been in the house at the time of the murder. Before midnight, since her husband was asleep, she left the house, impelled by strong desire, and went to a little shelter on the cliffs, a place she had been in the habit of frequenting. The murderer, who had cruelly shot a sleeping man, must have watched her leave the house and entered in the same way. Possibly had made use of the same means of ingress before. Prisoner's counsel was able to prove that the murdered man had been on many occasions away from his house for weeks at a time, and therefore had friends and acquaintances of whom his household knew nothing.

Again and again Mr. Justice Meredon glanced at the faces of the jury.

Mr. Delliter's impressive voice made the most of the story he had to tell. On the night of the murder the woman placed in the dock on a cruel charge had not been alone in the stone shelter on the cliffs. A man, in deep trouble and anxiety, had gone there, just as his client had, for quiet reflection—and this man was a stranger to Eleanor Desterre. There they had both heard the clock of Trescanon Church strike one—the hour at which both James and Elizabeth Carton swore their master was alive. This man, whose name was not even known to the defence, had paced the cliffs, or sat in the little stone refuge until four o'clock in the morning, when he had accompanied the lady, in whose society he had so strangely found himself, as far as the field-track to Trescanon Vale House.

The face of the Judge enthroned on the bench quivered; he sat there as the outward sign of the majesty of temporal power, the calm impartiality of the law, as one raised above human passion, above sentiment. But for a moment all before him faded away. He saw the moss and fern grown shelter, the majestic sweep of a glorious bay——and wistful eyes set in a thin face, heard only the tones of a woman's patient voice:—

"There is something in your face that gives me a curious feeling of safety. Fear could not master me in your presence."

And now he sat there as a Judge and she was the prisoner in the dock.

Again Mr. Justice Meredon exerted his power of self-control to the utmost, forcing himself to listen carefully to the brilliant advocate. The prisoner in the dock had pleaded "Not Guilty," and upon those two words, unsupported by evidence, hung all the force of the speech for the defence. The Court was breathlessly attentive, but the eyes of the woman, on trial for her life, did not rest on the face of the brilliant pleader, only clung, pathetic in their dumb intensity, to that of the Judge. Was there an unspoken challenge in that look? Did it suggest that he, at least, would know the truth of the story told in court?

Mr. Delliter owned that the alibi on which the case for the prisoner rested was not supported by the word of any witness who could be brought into court. With curious and yet most telling candour he took those listening to his eloquence into his confidence, describing in detail the difficulties experienced by the defence.

Hotel proprietors in the Trescanon district had permitted the scrutiny of their books, but no person had been found who owned to spending the night following the 23rd of July on the cliffs. Owners of country-houses had searched their diaries and memories quite vainly, but still the accused person clung to the story, the truth of which it was quite evident her counsel firmly believed.

Tears stood in the eyes of men and women alike as they listened to the eloquent speaker testifying his own conviction that still, though almost at the eleventh hour, the truth would be known. That stranger might still come forward! Did his hearers think of miracles? He, for one, believed in unseen forces. God Himself was on the side of the innocent and helpless.

The counsel for the prosecution made no attempt to tear to shreds this poor little story to which the prisoner clung. He commented, simply, on the unlikelihood of a delicate woman spending hours in a rough shelter on the cliffs when a luxurious home was at her command.

The Judge had little to do but listen; the conduct of the case was distinguished by dignity on the one side, fervid but controlled eloquence on the other.

Where should help be found?

The trial was approaching its conclusion

when a note was brought into court and handed to the solicitors in charge of the case. The note was passed to the junior counsel for the defence, who gave it immediately to his leader.

Instantly, and with a ring of triumph in his voice, Mr. Delliter made appeal to the Judge that the ordinary procedure might be interrupted and a witness for the defence heard.

Mr. Justice Meredon, in carefully-schooled tones, granted the request. Two persons were ushered into the court: a man, manifestly a gentleman, accompanied by a lady heavily veiled. Several people in the court recognized the man as a well-known figure in society whose doings in the fashionable world had always excited much comment. He had spent, so the world said, a large fortune in a foolish fashion. Then his marriage with a beautiful girl had also given the newspapers interesting matter to describe and discuss.

The unexpected witness was permitted to tell his story in his own words. He was sworn, and gave his name as Kenneth Hardyn.

The prisoner in the dock made no sign, but the Judge, intensely aware of her slightest movement, knew that she sighed heavily like a tired child. The wardress, seated close to her, was openly wiping tears from her eyes.

The court was perfectly still as Kenneth Hardyn began his story: "On the night of the 23rd of July I dined with a friend at Trescanon Cliff Hotel. I had been put ashore from a yacht in order to see him contest the golfing championship of the west, and I intended to take the night express to town. As my friend had been playing all day I refused to allow him to accompany me to the station when I turned out of the hotel about half-past ten. The express was due at 10.45. In the dark I took a wrong turning, missed my way, and got to the station too late. Of course, I decided to return to the hotel and put up there for the night. When I struck into the lane that is a short cut two persons were in front of me, and as I walked on grass they were unaware of my approach. I heard the man say: 'If you marry me I swear to be always true to you, swear to become a decent fellow.' It sounds a simple thing, but it upset me completely.

"Two years before I had said the same thing myself. I did not make for the hotel, but turned off along a cliff path and gave myself up to unhappy and miserable reflection. The night was wonderfully beautiful, the stars shone brilliantly, and brought up, as it were, against the quiet and the peace, I seemed to see things in their true light. I forgot everything except the subject of my thoughts. About midnight I stumbled into a little stone shelter; while I was there someone else, in trouble, too, came. In the dark, she and I, thus strangely thrown together—talked. To me she gave good and wise counsel. So deeply did she affect me that the passing of the time—Trescanon Church clock struck one—scarcely seemed of any account. Now and again I paced the cliff path, because I had no overcoat; but it was not until four o'clock in the morning that the lady, who had been so good to me, told me she had only meant to stay in her place of refuge for one hour or so; she was in the habit of coming there when she wanted comfort. I accompanied her as far as a field-track, which she told me led to her home. She wore a thick fur-lined coat, with a hood, over a black evening dress of satin, I think. I caught an early train at six o'clock in the morning, that took me to Plymouth. There I took advantage of an excursion steamer starting for Brest. In a tiny, out-of-the-way place I found my wife, and did just as my wise friend of the dark had advised: I told her everything.

"I knew nothing of what had occurred at Trescanon, saw no English papers for some time. My wife and I travelled on to Switzerland and Italy. Several times I received a curious impression, waking and sleeping, that I was needed at home. We decided, though there seemed no ostensible cause, to return. Last night, in town, I read, in the evening paper, the account of the trial of Mrs. Desterre. We left London this morning and came here as quickly as possible. I was afraid to telegraph, though I did not think there could be any real doubt that the Mrs. Desterre, accused of a cruel murder, was the lady who had helped me to reshape my life, my unknown friend of the stone shelter.

"I am able, now, to swear positively that from midnight after the 23rd of July I had the privilege of being in the company of Mrs. Desterre, who never left the shelter at all. Someone else, aware of that outer staircase described in the evidence, must have watched her out of the house, entered in the same way, and shot the sleeping man. I knew that the stranger who had been so good to me was in deep trouble, but she said, quite simply, that though she should

have been watching by a sick bed, it had been impossible for her to remain in the house until she had visited what she called her place of peace and regained courage."

"THE JUDGE BENT HIS HEAD IN ASSENT. 'I DO NOT KNOW HOW SHE HAS LIVED THROUGH ALL SHE HAS BEEN CALLED UPON TO ENDURE.'"

No one attempted to ask the witness any questions. Every word he uttered was true, and his hearers knew it. In a court of law he had made a statement as to the way in which the crime had been committed, but no notice was taken. The foreman of the jury passed a note to the Judge on the bench; everyone knew that it meant the jury felt assured of the innocence of the prisoner in the dock.

Mr. Justice Meredon spoke for barely five minutes. He began by alluding to Mr. Delliter's telling declaration of belief in the unseen forces, the help rendered to humanity, in moments of dire need. He spoke in terms of warm praise of the manly and straightforward evidence given by Mr. Kenneth Hardyn which they had been privileged to

hear. He complimented both the counsel engaged in the case, referring a second time to the declaration of faith they had been privileged to hear and which must leave its impression on them all. The innocence of Eleanor Norton Desterre had been proved in a signal manner.

When the Judge left the bench, he sat for a long time in his robing-room thinking of the frail figure. He heard the sound of cheering in the streets, and knew that a great crowd had assembled. Then he sent a message to Mr. Kenneth Hardyn begging that he would allow him a few minutes, and waited, still in his robes, for his coming.

As soon as his door opened he rose with outstretched hand.

"I am glad to have this honour, sir," he said, cordially. "I imagined you would not have left the building."

"The crowd is tremendous, and my wife is with Mrs. Desterre. It is I who am honoured by your wishing to see me."

The Judge asked a question with simple directness: "Have you seen Mrs. Desterre?"

"My wife is with Mrs. Desterre persuading her to return with us to London, to stay with us. I owe her more than I can ever hope to repay. How heroic she has been!"

The Judge bent his head in assent. "I do not know how she has lived through all she has been called upon to endure. Do you know, Mr. Hardyn, I was in a terrible position. I should have stated to the jury, although the fact would not have saved the prisoner, that four years ago I had the honour of meeting Mrs. Desterre in the stone shelter of Trescanon Cliffs. She told me then she was in the habit of frequenting the little place. I never saw her again, never even heard her name, until yesterday morning, when I took the place of Mr. Justice Linnell."

The man to whom he spoke did not need to glance at the fine face; he understood perfectly how the Judge must have suffered. His own happiness had granted him sympathetic insight.

"You will have much to say to Mrs. Desterre," he answered, quietly. "May I suggest that, when you return to town, nothing would give us greater pleasure than the honour of welcoming you at our house?"

"And I shall be very glad indeed to come. Thank you for asking me."

Again the Judge held out his hand. As soon as Mr. Hardyn left him he submitted to the removal of his robes and walked restlessly about his room. Then he remembered that the murderer of Henry Desterre had yet to be discovered. Would it mean that she, who had suffered so much from publicity, must see again the secret and hidden pages of her book of life opened for the world's curious gaze?

Was it man or woman who, in the darkness of screening night, had watched Eleanor Desterre out of the house and then crept up the outer staircase on to the balcony and through the open window into an untenanted bedroom? It seemed to him he could answer the question. Surely the torturer of a good woman had met death at the hands of a bad one who had taken possession of a revolver kept in a place known to her and then, with it in hand, gone down a passage, unseen, unquestioned, and shot the master of Trescanon Vale House.

The Judge hoped with quite passionate intensity that if ever the true murderer were brought to justice he might not be on the bench. He could never again bear to hear that name, Eleanor Desterre, tossed from one to another in a court of law.

Then, as he lifted his face to a sudden gleam of sunlight, a thought came to him. Hopes, which had hitherto never whispered alluringly to him, sprang into existence. He dreamed of the joy of knowing that a woman's life, a woman's happiness, might really be safe in his keeping. Then, indeed, might he hope to keep fear from her—let her feel that of her care was taken. She had said she felt safe where he was, and yet he had never been able to do anything to help her, not when she had told him, on Trescanon Cliffs, the sad story of the misery she endured, not when he sat enthroned above her as Judge.

The man shivered as he remembered. But the sunshine, gilding the closing hours of the day, suggested hope. And it seemed to him, suddenly, that he could see the eyes of the woman he loved, bright with hope and happiness, their pathetic wistfulness gone for ever.

Some Humours of the Post Office.

By AN EX-P.O. SERVANT.

Illustrated by Helen McKie.

ONE hardly looks for anything humorous in the Post Office. Indeed, quite a large proportion of the great British public regard the department as a very matter-of-fact institution, surrounded with red tape, and served by a staff lacking in humour, and sometimes even devoid of civility. But since all classes meet at its counters and use its various services, so it follows that there is a funny side to its colossal activities. The public demands much more than the conveyance of letters and parcels, and the following instance will show that little-heard-of but hard-working class of men, postmasters, in a new light.

The head of a large office in the South received one day a delicately-scented missive, asking him personally to recommend a nice, quiet Baptist family into whose bosom a young lady, daughter of the letter-writer, could be received as a paying guest. The postmaster was particularly requested to inquire on the following points: the lowest terms per week, what kind of table was kept, and what laundry arrangements could be made. And, finally, the applicant omitted a stamped addressed envelope, on the plea that postmasters' correspondence would no doubt travel free!

It is probably at the counter of a busy office where the humour of the Post Office is most in evidence.

The writer well remembers the rage of an old, white-haired lady when he courteously asked her to re-write a portion of a telegram which was unreadable.

"You mind your own business, young man; no business to read people's private affairs. Shame on yer, I say. Me own daughter can read her mother's writing, and you do your dooty and send it as it's wrote there."

To attempt to explain the whole process of telegraphy to the poor old soul was impossible, and she flung out of the office in a great state of fury, taking her telegram with her.

On another occasion an Irish farm labourer over here for the summer tendered a telegram which read:—

"Dear sister, are you dead? If so, wire."

The clerk gently remarked that it was a strange message to send, and queried its correctness.

"Shure, sorr, it is; but Oi've received a letter this morning sayin' me darlin' sister be dead, and it's shure Oi want to be before Oi lave me good masther for the ould counthry."

And as it was written the telegram was dispatched, although queried at each transmitting centre.

"YOU MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS, YOUNG MAN."

The nervousness of a newly-appointed counter-clerk is a source of constant enjoyment to his more experienced colleagues, and the following incidents are vouched for.

A certain young clerk was most anxious to get on counter duty, and thus vary the deadly monotony of the sorting office, and, by assuring his postmaster that he was familiar with all the necessary regulations

"SHE WAS SURPRISED TO RECEIVE FOURPENCE IN COPPERS DOWN THE TRUMPET."

governing the transaction of the various branches of business, he was scheduled for a mixed counter duty. But he had not allowed for his nervousness, and the two following disasters, from his point of view, happened on the first day. A gentleman arrived in a great hurry and pushed a telegram form through the opening out of his turn, saying, "Take this, young man; I must catch the ten-twenty." The clerk seized the form, and in front of a whole concourse of people popped it on the scales in a vain endeavour to arrive at the charge by weighing the number of words instead of counting them in the usual manner. The incident was appreciated by the prospective customers, and the clerk beat a hasty retreat, the laughter of the public ringing in his ears. Later in the day he served a very deaf old lady with stamps. She carried an ear-trumpet, and putting the useful instrument up to the wire netting to hear what the clerk had to say was surprised to receive fourpence in coppers down the trumpet. The youngster apologized freely for his blunder, but the old lady would not rest until she had interviewed the postmaster, and even then she felt convinced that she had been the victim of an unkind practical joke.

Some amusement was caused at a busy counter one day when the clerk, issuing a dog licence, asked in the usual way, "What name, please?" meaning, of course, the owner's. "Hercules—and he's a fine house-dog, too," came the reply.

The Post Office is often held up to ridicule on account of the delay occasioned to a postcard, especially when we read that the item had taken two years and forty-one days to travel ten miles, but it is far oftener the case that the public themselves are the offenders by not properly addressing their correspondence.

In some cases—quite a respectable number, too—letters, etc., are posted without any address being inscribed. I well remember a case arising out of the latter point. A well-known tradesman in a Midland city, noted for his irascible disposition, called one day at the counter, almost foaming with rage. He stormed away for some minutes at a meek-looking clerk, who at last summoned up courage to ask what was the trouble.

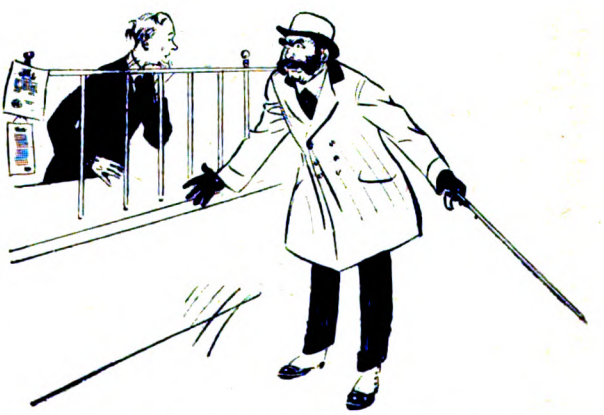
"Trouble! Trouble enough, when your confounded Post Office cannot deliver a postcard directed to a well-known councillor. I posted one two days ago for delivery only four streets away, and this morning I learn that my friend has not received it. Most important matter, too—lost me an order worth twenty pounds."

"Excuse me a moment, sir," said the clerk, and going to the sorting office he brought back the actual postcard.

Showing the reverse side to the irate tradesman he said, "Is this the card?"

"Yes, confound your impertinence. What, in the name of goodness, can you say to such colossal stupidity? I'll sue the Postmaster-General for the twenty pounds."

"But, sir, would it not be better to address your postcards in future?" said the clerk, as



"HE STORMED AWAY FOR SOME MINUTES AT A MEEK-LOOKING CLERK."

he deftly twisted the card round, showing the address side to be blank.

The old gentleman turned away without a word, looking decidedly crestfallen as he left the office.

The general extension of the telephone is the cause of much bad language and ill-temper, but here, again, there is a softer and funnier side. Two incidents which came within the writer's experience may be cited here.

In a large Yorkshire town a city councillor served on the Baths and Parks Committee. The latter also included the cemetery in their administration, and the councillor in question was almost daily calling up the cemetery number on the 'phone. By a coincidence the telephone number of the local Hippodrome was almost identical with the former. Whether the mistake occurred at the local exchange or whether it was the councillor's does not matter, but it is a fact that the worthy gentleman one day had almost completed the purchase of a double grave instead of a box for two at the local Hippodrome, and he had to encounter a considerable amount of good-natured chaff from his colleagues as a consequence.

On another occasion a call at the counter telephone was received from a distant subscriber, who asked if Cox was about. "Yes," replied the clerk; "I'll get him." And Cox, the office porter, was unearthed and put in the call-box. "Halloa, Cox, that you?" "Yes, sir." "How long have you been there?" "Two years." "What's that?" "Two years." "What on earth have you been doing?" "Cleaning the office up, and such-like." And then the call was cut off, Cox returning to his work thinking he had been had.

The sequel was not long in forthcoming. A traveller who had been impatiently pacing the length of the counter for some considerable time asked the counter-clerk to let him know if a call came through from his principal. "What name, please?" replied the clerk. "Oh, Cox is my name." Then ensued explanations, but the traveller didn't see the humorous side of the matter, especially when the charge for another call to his principal amounted to two shillings and twopence.

The staff of a large post-office comprises a motley crowd drawn from all quarters of the British Isles, the service being particularly popular with Irishmen and Scotchmen. Discipline has to be kept, and it frequently happens that a supervising officer makes himself very obnoxious to his subordinates by the manner in which he interprets the code-book laid down for his guidance. Insubordination, even in the slightest degree, is not tolerated by the department, and some members of the staff who kick against the vagaries of a supervisor adopt various expedients to get on something like level terms. Some years ago, in an office in the Eastern counties, a supervisor made himself so generally detested by his bullying ways and absolute want of tact in dealing with his subordinates that a state approximating open rebellion obtained. Unfortunately, the postmaster, a man of the old school, who never tempered justice with mercy, backed up his deputy. One of the youngsters, however, led an unceasing but undetected campaign against the unpopular supervisor. The latter could never detect the culprit who placed soap in the kettle when tea relief was due and arranged buckets of water, etc., in the unwary official's path when at midnight he inspected the deserted office. Nor did the supervisor dream that a certain junior invariably boiled his eggs in the martinet's coffee left carefully simmering on the hob. The supervisor's wife complained bitterly, too, that all the refuse of the dining-room, including empty stout and beer bottles, found their way home in that gentleman's dinner-basket. It is said that much domestic unhappiness was occasioned by the bottles, as the supervisor posed as a keen temperance reformer, and it happened sometimes that the basket arrived and was opened in the presence of their mutual friends. In spite of explanations and protestations, the idea got abroad that Mr. Robinson was not the man he seemed.

It should be added that a good deal of Mr. Robinson's unpopularity arose from his efforts on behalf of temperance amongst the staff. He would pry round the men's lockers in an attempt to discover whether a bottle of Bass or a flask of spirits had been smuggled in. Although intoxicants are now allowed to be sold in the dining-rooms of certain large offices they were not allowed on the premises of the smaller post-offices, and a breach of the rule involved heavy penalties.

In Mr. Robinson's time (I call him Robinson, but you will understand that his name was quite different) a considerable number of the men drank rather heavily. The night duty men would spend the day at country hostelries, snatching an hour or two's sleep before coming on duty at midnight, and they invariably smuggled in a reviver for the wee small hours. When Mr. Robinson was in

charge they had their whisky or beer for breakfast, and to avoid disaster the liquor would be emptied into a tea-pot when they came on duty, and the bottles hidden. For the youngsters in the know it was very amusing to see the old hands pouring out their decoction from a meek-looking tea-pot right under the nose of the unsuspecting supervisor. And once a happy-go-lucky Irishman emptied a goodly portion of rum into Mr. Robinson's coffee before he came into the messroom. The tale goes that he smacked his lips that morning with evident enjoyment, and promptly ordered another half-pound tin of that particular brand of coffee.

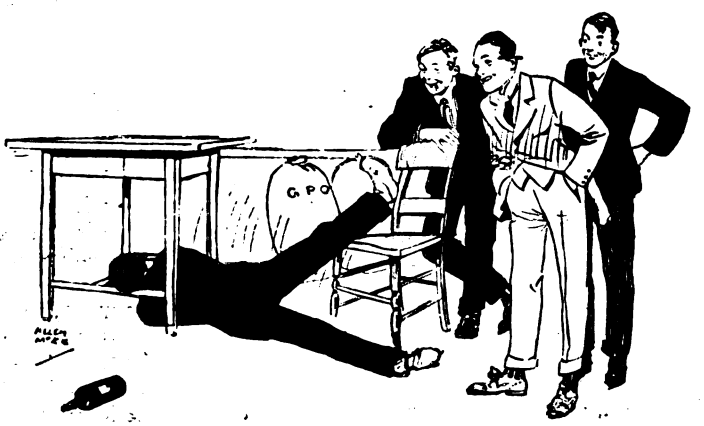
Although he probably never knew, Mr. Robinson, or, rather, a suit of his clothes, was the cause of a huge joke amongst the younger fry.

Mr. Robinson, like the careful man he was, invariably wore out his old suits—unkind stories were told of the longevity of his clothes—on night duty. On one occasion, in the summer, he got wet through coming to the office, but, as luck would have it, he had in the messroom a parcel containing a suit which had just returned from being dyed and cleaned. To avoid a cold, he changed his clothes, leaving the wet suit to dry until the following night. The youngsters, who came on for the North mail, seized on the suit, and soon had a very respectable imitation of the unpopular supervisor lying in an infrequently-used room, head under table. The pose was that of a drunken man, and a string of youngsters was seen to be filing in and out of the room to view Mr. Robinson's supposed fall from rectitude. Then the seniors heard of it, and they crept in to see the disgrace of an old colleague. The majority of the men never dreamt that the figure was anything but what it purported to be. One old sorter who had worked side by side with his superior actually, out of the goodness of his heart, went out and obtained a cab to take his colleague home. And the cab had arrived at the office before the cat was let out of the bag by the instigator of the affair, now somewhat nervous.

The rural postmen of the old school, who drove out in all weathers in their little red pony-carts, were a fine set of men. Alas! they are almost as extinct as the dodo, the cycle and motor having ousted them.

With a cheery good day for everyone, many a good tale could they tell of life on the road. They knew to a farthing the income of everybody on their route, and far more of the people's private affairs than was dreamt of. But in justice to them they rarely, if ever, told these things. They liked their glass, too, and were welcome customers at the wayside inns, few of which they missed. Of course, these calls were strictly against the rules of the department, and were severely punished if discovered.

One day the postmaster of a country town determined to accompany one old "mounted" postman. The postmaster was a strict teetotaller, it should be said. Three miles out the Three Horseshoes stood a distance back from the road, and although the driver tugged manfully at the reins, the pony turned off and came to a pause opposite the front door of the hostelry. The postmaster knew that the house was not in the postman's delivery, and for a moment there was an awkward pause. The old chap saved the situation, however, by scrambling down and leading the pony to the drinking trough, remarking, "She'll never pass this trough, sir, and I allays lets her have her fill, for it's uphill work from Newton."



"THEY SOON HAD A VERY RESPECTABLE IMITATION OF THE UNPOPULAR SUPERVISOR LYING IN AN INFREQUENTLY-USED ROOM, HEAD UNDER TABLE."

Quite a large number of people in my time used to imagine the halfpenny post was available for letters, if only the flap of the envelope were left unsealed. Most personal letters were often sent in this way, and I have known enclosures of considerable value accompanying the missives, including postal orders.

"THE POSTMASTER SUFFERED TERRIBLY."

But surely the limit was reached in this respect by the old lady who sent her son's clean shirt in the folds of a newspaper with the customary halfpenny wrapper surrounding the whole. Inside was a scrap of paper which said "that she hoped those nosey Post Office folk wouldn't open it, as they would be bound to mess the cuffs of the shirt."

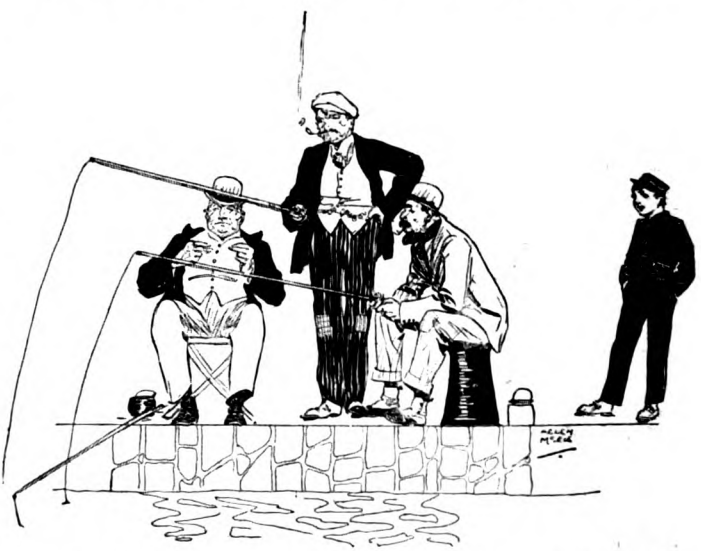
The stamping of letters by machinery is of comparatively recent introduction, and at the outset was the cause of some trouble to the staff. Only the ordinary flat letter can be sent through, and if envelopes containing such small articles as cigarettes, chocolates, peppermints, needles, and pills are faced up with the ordinary correspondence, the machine resembles a Gatling gun in full rip, for the articles fly out at dangerous angles. The story goes that a stamper who would persist in keeping open his mouth got quite a goodly number of pills shot therein. A sorter who found three pills shot out of their envelope by the machine was feeling unwell, and in desperation took them. When the cover was found to which they belonged, it was discovered that they were intended for a horse. The sorter's state was pitiable, especially when later he experienced the full benefit of his "cure."

Another stamping machine story is perhaps worth relating. A new sorting-office in a southern town had been fitted with the latest form of machine, and the postmaster, a pompous individual, asked the local mayor and other worthies to the opening. To show that his official knowledge embraced every detail of Post Office work, he not only explained the working, but started the machine, brushing on one side the attendant. Quickly grasping a pile of waiting letters, he ran them through, discoursing volubly on the efficiency of the machine. There was a sudden whiz and tear, and at once the air was filled with that abomination, electric snuff. The postmaster suffered terribly, and it was a wheezy, sneezy party who filed out into the street, the inspection only half completed.

Who has not a warm regard for the ruddy-cheeked telegraph messenger, as he progresses leisurely along, often deep in the latest adventure of Mr. Sexton Blake? The boys, although perhaps you would never guess it, are not free from official cares. The "skin" which troubles the clerk and postman by asking for explanations on this and that just as relentlessly pursues the messenger. The "skins" are usually issued in connection with delays in delivery, and also for tom-foolery incidental to boyhood.

Here is a sample of a messenger's reply to a complaint of excessive time occupied in delivering two telegrams within a distance of three miles, to be covered on a cycle. To use his own words to the postmaster:—

"DEAR SIR,—I had two talegrammes, and I went to Smith's Boilerworks first, then I come back along the kanal and watched three men fishing. They catched two gudgeon and



"THEN I COME BACK ALONG THE KANAL AND WATCHED THREE MEN FISHING."

three small bullheads, and then I went on to the factorie at the bottom of the lane. As I come away from the factorie I met a lad I used to know, and he said, 'Where are you going?' and I said, 'Where are you going?' and he said, 'Home to Ashford, and my mother will give you some apples.' Then I was hungary when I come back, so I went home and had a pancake or two, so I was late. I am sorry this occurred, but it shall not do so again.—Yours truly sorry, BENJAMIN BUTT."

Still, in spite of a strong caution, it did occur again, and that frequently, and a steam-roller which had had the misfortune to run over a man was the cause. The messenger could *not* pass the roller without staying to watch it at work—sometimes for an hour—picturing, it is supposed, the whole tragedy again, and so gratifying his morbid nature. So he quitted the service and, strange to say, became a valued *employé* of an undertaker.

Another messenger having met with a cycle accident on duty was asked to furnish full particulars in a report. It was brief and to the point: "I was coming back with my feet up and there was a hole in the road which I didn't see. And when I came to myself I was unconscious and there were twelve persons and a lady standing round."

Punctuality is strongly insisted upon in the service, and with duties commencing at all sorts of unearthly hours some men experience great difficulty in keeping to their scheduled hour of attendance. One such man I knew confessed that out of a year of early duty—4 a.m.—he had been more or less late on more than half the mornings. In fact, it was so bad that he was threatened with dismissal. He tried various expedients, but none of them proved infallible in getting him up. Even two powerful alarums set together would not thoroughly rouse him, for he confessed to going off again whilst putting his boots on.

Having observed a considerable amount of vibration when one of his alarm clocks went off, he fixed up an ingenious contrivance which let fall a tin tray. He only tried it one morning, for the effect nearly frightened him to death. Forgetting his contrivance he rushed to the window shouting "Police" and "Murder" when the tray fell. He was completely unnerved by the process. He then fixed his invention to tilt a small mug of cold water on his head, despite the protests of his landlady, who objected to the wet pillows. His rooted objection to cold water was largely responsible for the success of this arrangement, and for twelve months his attendance was exemplary. Then he married and depended on his better half to awaken him. To make doubly sure on one special occasion he set the cold water alarum, but he had forgotten that his wife slept on the side where the bracket was fixed. He woke the next morning right enough, but he had some difficulty in accounting for certain scratches on his face which his colleagues averred were not there the previous night.

Much more might be written, but perhaps the foregoing will show that the prosaic work of the Post Office has a lighter side.

"HE HAD FORGOTTEN THAT HIS WIFE SLEPT ON THE SIDE WHERE THE BRACKET WAS FIXED."

SCANDALOUS!

By

RICHARD MARSH.

Illustrated by Treyer Evans.

"Hôtel de l'Océan,

"Dunkerque.

"DEAR MISS HUBERT,—I have stolen an overcoat."

Having read as far as this Miss Hubert lowered the sheet of paper she was holding to examine the letter again. It was written with a pencil of some kind, on greyish white paper, which was so common that she did not remember to have ever seen anything quite so common before. As the pencil which had been used was a coloured one—apparently a sort of flesh colour—and the handwriting so bad that it could be correctly described as a "scrawl," the result was that the whole thing was almost undecipherable.

"Who is this writing to me? It is to me."

She once more referred to the envelope—for about the dozenth time—to make sure. The address on the envelope which had contained the letter she was reading was as illegible as the epistle it contained. So far as she could make out it was "Miss Ethel Hubert, Pleasant Prospect, Eastbourne." Pleasant Prospect was the name of the boarding-house at which she had stopped when on a visit to Eastbourne the previous summer. It seemed that the letter had been delivered at Pleasant Prospect only a few days ago, months after she had left, and had been obligingly enclosed by the proprietor in one of his own envelopes and sent on to her at once.

She set herself to recommence its perusal.

"DEAR MISS HUBERT,—I have stolen an overcoat. I am wearing it now."

"I cannot conceive," she paused to tell herself, "how anyone who had such a confession to make should have written to me."

"I found it in the trenches," the writer continued, "so stole it at sight. If you had been as wet as I was, and as cold, you would have done the same—to say nothing of my own overcoat being nothing but a wreck. I am a junior captain in the 22nd Surrey Rifles. We were ordered to occupy the trench just vacated by the 14th Sussex, and, as I have said, almost directly we got in my eyes fell on an overcoat, which I annexed. Then a splinter from a 'Jack Johnson' cut my cheek—rather a nasty gash it was—then I got sick-listed, and here I am, going back to the game to-morrow. For the first time this afternoon as ever was I explored the inside pocket of someone else's overcoat, and found the envelope which you will get with this. You will see it has been addressed to you. So I am sending it on. One day, perhaps, you will tell me if it reached you.—Yours truly, J. G. BELLCHAMBER. (Home address, Captain J. G. Bellchamber, Naval and Military Club.)"

Having read the letter to a close, Ethel

Hubert placed it on the table by which she was seated, and gave a sort of gasp.

"That is the most extraordinary document"—she told herself—"I ever came across. I hardly dare to open it. What a curious-looking envelope!"

It was unusually long and narrow. Its original colour was uncertain. It might have been laid in a pool of oozy mud and left there to soak.

"What's that written in the top left-hand corner?" She called in the aid of a reading-glass. "It looks like 'Please post if found'—that suggests an Irishman. I don't see how it could have been posted if it hadn't been found. Same address: 'Miss Ethel Hubert, Pleasant Prospect, Eastbourne.' That seems to suggest that it is from someone I met at Eastbourne. Now, who was there that I met at Eastbourne on whom I made such an impression that he felt drawn to write to me, even in the trenches? I can think of nothing male. The only persons in whom I took the slightest interest were the Borrowdale girls, and I've seen—and heard—plenty of them since. This person seems to have supposed that my only address was at Pleasant Prospect; anyhow, he doesn't seem to have been acquainted with any other, so he couldn't have known much about me. Perhaps if I look inside——"

She looked inside. There were several sheets of thin foreign note-paper, which had suffered with the envelope. They were closely covered with thick, sprawling hand-writing, which probably owed its being to a broad-nibbed pen.

With difficulty she made out what the writer said, pausing, now and then, to call in the aid of the reading-glass. The very first words caused her to prick up her ears—by the way, pretty little pink ones, set close to her head, they were.

"DEAR MISS HUBERT," the letter began. "Do you remember that day on Beachy Head?"

"Beachy Head?" She stopped for a moment to think. "Can it be——?" She slightly changed colour; she was one of those young women to whom a flush gives an air of charm. "I do believe——" She did not say what she believed, but, flushing a little more, went on.

"I wonder! How long ago was it? This is winter, 'the stormy winds do blow,' and 'the rain it raineth every day.' That was when July was at its loveliest and best. What weather! Don't you remember? You must! Not a cloud in the sky, a breeze whispering secrets, the air so clear! Do you remember how we discussed the question of how far we could really see across the briny? I know we differed—was it five miles you said, or was it fifty? Do you remember? I do; I remember everything, every moment, every word. I am prepared to enter for an examination on the subject of what we talked about, and to back myself to pass with honours. What is more, I could describe—to the examiner's satisfaction—how you said each blessed thing. Do you remember anything I said? I wonder. I like, as I sit here, in this cheery trench, with the rain coming down in bucketfuls, and the guns boom-boom-booming—they boom in all sorts of different keys like a blaring lunatic orchestra, out of time and out of tune—I'll begin that sentence again. I like, I say, to think that you do remember something—O lady with the big child's eyes.

"I remember—I am going to tell you some of the things which I remember; perhaps if I were nearer I shouldn't dare. But since this concoction may never reach you—and, anyhow, we shall probably never meet again—I take my courage in both hands and write boldly, like a man. I remember how sweet I thought you looked the first time you swam into my ken—'swam into my ken' is a good phrase, isn't it? I hope it's right. I lay on the tussocky grass within a hundred feet of the signalling-station; you paused at the edge of the cliff, looking down at the new lighthouse far below. The sight of you set me quivering. I am one of those persons who cannot look down from a height; the thought of what might happen if you went a step too far, or the edge of the cliff gave way—the cliff is always falling away at Beachy Head—rendered it difficult even for me to breathe. What a relief it was when you moved farther from the edge!

"I did not behave well; I behaved badly. You moved along the cliff towards Birling Gap; I rose from the grass and followed you—yes, I intentionally followed you. I meant to speak to you if I got a chance—and to make a chance if one didn't come my way.

"There, I have confessed! I am a bounder—you can say it if you please. I have been taught that only a bounder takes advantage of a lady being alone to force on her his conversation. I forced my conversation upon you—and you were very much alone. I don't care. I ask your pardon on my bended knees; but if the

occasion recurred I'd do it again! That's frank; so now you know.

"I can't exactly say that a chance did come my way—but I made one. Do you remember how I did it? Call me brazen-faced! I took my hat off—when you were at your loneliest, there wasn't another soul in sight—marched straight up to you, and said, 'I wish you wouldn't walk so close to the cliff.'

"I doubt if, till that moment, you had been conscious—shall I say, of my propinquity? It's a horrid word. You stopped—flushed—I had startled you. I knew I ought to be kicked. 'I beg your pardon; what did you say?' you asked. I stuck to my guns—though all the time I knew what I deserved. 'I said,' I repeated, 'that I should be glad if you would not go so close to the edge of the cliff.' You seemed amazed. 'I don't in the least understand what you mean.' You had just the right kind of voice—I noticed that—everything about you was just right. I have such a hoarse, husky voice myself that you can't think what a relief it is to hear real music proceeding from the lips of a woman. I tried to explain, haltingly. With what a perfect air you listened! You put me in my place. All at once there came into your eyes, round your lips, all over you, the dawn of a smile. You became amused; you even laughed—just a tiny little ripple of mirth.

"'DEAR MISS HUBERT,' THE LETTER BEGAN. 'DO YOU REMEMBER THAT DAY ON BEACHY HEAD?'"

You told me you did not suffer from dizziness yourself; that height—the edge of a cliff, of a precipice—made no difference. Presently, before I knew it, as in a dream, we were walking side by side—and we were talking. You told me that you had done some serious climbing—the different parts of the world in which it had been done—and I told you—what did I tell you? Do you remember? I wonder."

She put the letter down; perhaps that was because her hands were just a little tremulous—even her lips seemed to quiver. There was something odd about her eyes, as if something sparkled in the corners. Her cheeks were flushed. She who prided herself on her insusceptibility to the feelings which are apt to play havoc with others, all at once found herself a prey to emotions which she did not even dare to try to understand.

Did she remember? the writer asked. Could she ever forget? How it all came back to her! "Hoarse and husky" did he call his voice? How absurd! It was certainly neither its hoarseness nor its huskiness which had had such a magnetic effect upon her, filling her with such a sense of comfortable ease, causing her—far from snubbing him—to fall in at his side.

What did that ridiculous, yet amazing, letter say next?

"We walked two miles without a break—either in the conversation or the pace. I asked when we reached the Gap if you wouldn't like to go down and look at the sea. You did not say we had been doing that all the while, you just went with me down the broken path on to the sand.

"We found a place on the beach—after all, there was not much sand—fairly comfortable—at least, we didn't notice it wasn't—and there we stayed. I'll dare you to say how long we stayed."

The challenge frightened her—even staring up in those parti-coloured, sprawling characters from that mud-stained paper. How long had they stayed?

"You did not want to have any tea—at least, you said so; you said it was absurd to talk of having tea at such an hour; that you had miles and miles to walk and it was near the dinner hour. You would be frightfully late. 'Very well,' I said, 'that's obvious. We'll have no tea—dinner instead.' You were amazed, shocked—I believe you were even horrified—to say nothing of being frightened. But we had dinner all the same, under the porch of the hotel which stands close to the top of the broken path—you and I together. I don't know what we had for dinner, whether the meal was good or bad; you were on one side of the table and I on the other—that's all I know. And we talked and laughed, and somewhere, I believe, in the back of your mind, you were wondering all the while how on earth you would get home.

"You walked home—five miles over the cliffs!

"There are some things which seem too sacred to speak about—that walk is one of them. The stars were shining by the time we got to Beachy Head, the moon was up by the time we had dropped down to the town. You remember our last resting-place upon the grass; the sort of constraint which came down upon us and tied our tongues? In some strange, subtle way something happened—and we both were changed. The rest of the way we were under a cloud of silence; the capacity for speech seemed to have left us. I said good-bye to you at the Wish Tower—and the day was done.

"It was only when I turned on to the path when you had gone, and strolled back towards Beachy Head beside the sea, that it occurred to me that I had never asked your name, and that you did not know mine. For all I could tell you had vanished into the unknown out of which you had come. For two days I never saw you. On the morning of the third I was standing with the crowd listening to the band. You came along the Promenade with a strange young woman on either side. You never glanced my way; I suppose no inward monitor told you I was there—you could hardly have forgotten me already. I shadowed you again; I followed till all three of you turned into a house on the Grand Parade. There were large gilt letters on the front—a name—Pleasant Prospect. A porter was standing at the door. I presented him with half a crown, and asked what were the names of the young ladies who had just gone in. Only one sticks in my mind—yours. You were the one in the centre, with a Miss Somebody on either side. You, he said, were Miss Ethel Hubert.

"That afternoon I left Eastbourne. I was a soldier—recently retired; a little sick, to speak the truth, with the slowness of promotion. Then came the war; in a trice I was a soldier again. I was in France with the first lot of troops sent out from England. I have been here ever since, fighting all the while; ages it seems. On the whole, I like the life as well as any I have ever known;

I am fighting for what England has always fought—for freedom, the right to live, to call one's soul one's own—and I have won promotion.

"I think that every day since that day I have thought of you. You will take this to be exaggeration; I assure you it is not. I can honestly declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, I never gave a woman a second thought—seriously—until, that afternoon, to repeat my own phrase, 'you swam into my ken.' And you have never swum out of it again—and you never will. I have tried, over and over again, day and night, to get into communication with you—and I know I have failed. Now here I am, in the trenches, in the wet and cold, and general discomfort—to which I have become case-hardened—writing to you—or, rather, trying to write, because my ink is half water—for the first time and the last, asking myself if it is possible to recall to your memory that day. I have had a bit of a wound. An ugly splinter from a 'Black Maria'—that's a piece of ordnance which vomits forth strange missiles—has played such mischief with my thigh that I can hardly walk. When the men with the stretcher come they'll hale me off to hospital. Nothing has been seen or heard of them for the last couple of days, so perhaps they will never come. What does it matter? I am probably quite as comfortable here. I don't want to be out of the fun.

"You did not tell me in so many words, but you gave me to understand—that day—that you had no entanglements with anything male. It is possible that since then you have become engaged; if so, tear this up; or show it to the man—and smile; and he will smile with you. Lucky dog!

"But if you are still—unattached, know, as the man said in the play falsely—I say truly—that you, the acquaintance of a day, the dream which I have never ceased to dream, are the first woman I have ever loved—the only woman—the first and the last.

"Do you think that is a silly confession for a man to make—a man situated as I am? Shall I tell you why I made it? One reason? Because I am tired of keeping the secret to myself—so I whisper it to you.—Your very faithful, obedient, devoted lover, DAVID CARPENTER."

That was the end of the letter.

It was a fact which she seemed to find it difficult to realize; sitting with it held in both her hands, staring at it, as if in search of something which she thought she might have missed. Then, suddenly, something came rushing to her eyes. She let the sheets of paper slip from her fingers; her head dropped forward; with her face pillowed on her arms she was the victim of emotions at whose very existence she had scoffed. The most unsentimental person in the world, she had never behaved like that before.

Hers was the oddest situation. She told herself a dozen times a day that one could hardly conceive of one more curious. During the days which followed she moved as one in a dream; borne this way and that by sensations which she would have found it hard to explain. Her married sisters, when they came to stop with her, always said that they could not understand how she possibly could live alone. They were apt to be quite frank upon the subject, as sisters are. Ada, the eldest, on more than one occasion, put the family point of view.

"It isn't as though you really were an old maid," she would explain; "after all, you are still only thirty-two—nowadays lots of women marry after they are thirty-two, and think themselves young. And really, you know, Ethel, there are times when you look young. Mrs. Norris only the other day, when I told her how old you were, assured me that she would never have taken you for a day more than twenty-seven. Look how you're flushing now—it's absurd."

Ada—who was Mrs. Paget—came to stop with Ethel a few days after she had received the letter. Ethel, if the thing had been possible, would have put her off; but she did not see how it could be done. She was so conscious of her extraordinary mental, moral, and physical condition that she would have given more than a trifle to have been able to avoid her sister's eyes.

Mrs. Paget was to be her visitor for at least a week. She had not been in the house a couple of hours when she commented on one strange fact.

"I can't think what's happened to you, Ethel; you look as if you had grown at least half-a-dozen years younger. I said as much to Jane."

So already her sister was talking her over with her elderly maid; a deeper flush probably made her look younger still.

"I am very sorry, Ada," she explained, "but the weather has been so fine lately, and I've been taking so much exercise, that I expect that's it."

Only a few days afterwards something did happen. A letter lay on the table when Ethel came down to breakfast—which had

"WITH HER FACE PILLOWED ON HER ARMS SHE WAS THE VICTIM OF EMOTIONS AT WHOSE VERY EXISTENCE SHE HAD SCOFFED."

again been readdressed from Pleasant Prospect. Jane, the handmaiden, who had passed a large part of her life in Mrs. Hubert's service, and who, at that lady's decease, had been transferred to her youngest daughter, commented on the presence of the letter with the freedom of an old domestic.

"It seems strange, Miss Ethel, that they should still be sending letters on to you from Eastbourne, considering what a long time it is since you were there."

"Yes, Jane; it does seem rather strange. I—I haven't the least idea who it's from."

She had not. The communication was in a blue envelope, whose very tint suggested to Miss Hubert the unusual, it was so unlike the envelopes she generally received. Eager though she was to learn what it contained, she studiously refrained from opening it while Jane's keen eyes were on her, lest its contents should be of a kind which would cause her demeanour to convey information to the maid which she would rather keep to herself. In her own way Jane was as sharp-eyed as Mrs. Paget.

"That's a lawyer's letter, that's what that is, Miss Ethel," she observed, lingering to perform various unnecessary offices. "I've seen them before. I suppose you're not owing anyone a bill?"

"Jane! What do you mean? What a thing for you to say!"

"Well, Miss Ethel, I was only thinking that you might have overlooked something, and one of those lawyers was sending it on. I can see that the sight of the envelope upsets you."

The statement was so true that Miss Hubert was rendered almost incapable of putting the speaker in her place. She only did it with an effort—and then not effectively.

"Really, Jane, you go too far. I can't allow you to talk to me like that. Can I not have a letter without its being remarked on by you? Please go now; I have everything I want."

Miss Hubert did not feel much more comfortable even when Jane had gone. The idea that all the eyes of the world were on her was growing of late into a sort of monomania; as though the presence of that "secret" in the secret drawer of the bureau upstairs was suspected by all and sundry, who, in consequence, were on tiptoe to discover what it meant. The notion that the readdressed blue envelope might have some further connection with the "secret" was almost an awful one to her.

Even when assured of privacy, a perceptible period of time elapsed before she opened the envelope. Although no longer afraid of unwelcome eyes, she seemed to be in a nervous dread of something; so that when, with tremulous fingers, she had opened the envelope and withdrawn the sheet of blue commercial paper it contained, she had to lay the letter down upon the table until she felt sufficiently mistress of herself to read it.

When she did read it her worst forebodings were more than fulfilled; compared to it the "secret" in the bureau, in a sense, was as nothing. According to the heading on the letter-paper, it came from a firm of lawyers in Lincoln's Inn Fields. It ran:—

"DEAR MADAM,—We have to advise you that our late client, David Carpenter, of 65, Arlington Street, London, Major in the 43rd British Rifles, has left you his sole residuary legatee. His testamentary dispositions, owing to circumstances over which he seems to have had no control, were of an informal and unusual kind, but are perfectly sound and valid. Our Mr. Pettigrew will have pleasure in waiting on you at any time you may appoint, to explain to you what they are; or we shall be very happy to see you here.

"We may mention that, so far as at present can be ascertained, the property to which you have become entitled may be valued roughly at some thirty thousand pounds; probably rather over than under.

"Awaiting your instructions, and holding ourselves always at your service,—We are, madam, your obedient servants, PETTIGREW, HARDING, AND BAINES."

That Miss Hubert did not master the meaning of this epistle on the first perusal was perhaps not strange; to be candid, the already sufficiently unstrung lady was so startled that it took her breath away. A second reading was not much better—or a third; they left her gasping.

What did the communication signify? What it said? The presumption was not unreasonable. Then, in that case, she was an heiress, the possessor of something in the neighbourhood of thirty thousand pounds.

The first feeling it conveyed to her mind was characteristic; in that event she certainly would not be able to conceal the fact from Ada, or from anyone. The whole truth would be out. She would have to admit that she had allowed an entire stranger to scrape an acquaintance with her; that she had suffered him to continue in her society on the footing, not only of an acquaintance, but of a familiar friend, sharing with him an expensive meal—she happened to have noticed the bill—for which he had paid; walking with him afterwards, in the darkness, over miles of lonely country—there had been passages in that walk of which she scarcely dared to think even in the silent watches of the night. What would people think—especially the family—when the truth was told, particularly in the light of this astounding communication from Messrs. Pettigrew, Harding, and Baines?

Would they not draw the worst conclusion—make matters out worse than they really were? Might they not take it for granted—such is the corruptness of human nature—that a perfect stranger would not leave her thirty thousand pounds for nothing? In some shape it must represent value received. At the thought of it Miss Hubert hid her face for shame.

Was she to go through life branded as a woman who had wheedled a fortune, by means known only to herself, out of a chance acquaintance, the companion of only a few hours?

It was only after she had contemplated the uncomfortable possibilities which the situation entailed on her that she became alive to another point of view. Obviously, if she had inherited a fortune, the testator could be no longer with the living—Major David Carpenter must be dead. It was not expressly stated in the letter, but the inference was, clearly, that he had been killed in fighting for his country. She recalled—how vividly!—the passage in the letter which Captain Bellchamber found in the pocket of the overcoat which he had stolen—where Major Carpenter referred to the "splinter" from a "Black Maria" which had played such havoc with his thigh. He was then waiting for the men with the stretcher to carry him to hospital—the men who were overdue. Had they never come? or arrived too late? or had he died in hospital? Contemplation of this point of view affected

Miss Hubert much more than the other. What did a fortune matter, after all, compared to the fact that he was dead? It was ridiculous—she was sure that Ada would say so; beyond the bounds of reason—that was a matter on which the family would be agreed. But the thought that the man who had come into her life like a flashlight, and out again, was among the great army of those who had died for King and country shook her to the foundations of her being. Nor was the position improved by the reflection that in her selfish dread for what she deemed her reputation it had not occurred to her to think of him at all. What did the thirty thousand pounds matter? What did it matter what they thought of her? What did anything matter—if he was dead?

His letter had been her greatest treasure. That was the real reason why she had locked it in her secret hiding-place; why she had kept its very existence secret. She knew it now. She had been a dreamer of dreams, although she had been so unwilling to admit it even to herself—and now all the glory, the radiance, the happiness for which the dreams had stood was dead.

Because Ethel Hubert was crying as she had never cried in all her life she did not hear that someone was tapping at the door—someone who presently came in—Jane.

"Why, Miss Ethel," exclaimed the maid, astonished at the spectacle which her mistress presented, "whatever is there wrong?"

"THERE'S A TELEGRAM, MISS. I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO SEE IT. I DO HOPE THERE'S NO MORE BAD NEWS."

Miss Hubert, caught unawares, looked round with an attempt at anger which was possibly designed to conceal the fact that her features were discoloured by her flooding tears.

"Jane!" she gasped—it was not easy for her just then to speak. "How dare you come into my room without knocking?"

Jane, legitimately aggrieved, was not slow in saying so.

"Without knocking?" she replied. "Miss Ethel, however can you say so? I am sure I knocked quite loud."

"I didn't hear you," sobbed the lady. "I didn't tell you you might come in. I never said a word."

"No, miss, you didn't; but it's the first time I've learned that I am to wait to be told to come in after knocking. There's a telegram, miss. I thought you might like to see it. I do hope there's no more bad news."

The maid held out the familiar buff envelope; the mistress drew back, as from something dangerous.

"Oh, Jane," she cried, "what can it be?"

"I'm sure, miss, I don't know. Can it have been sent on, miss, from Eastbourne, like the letter you had this morning?"

Had it not been that, in that moment of tragedy, her sense of dignity was too strong, she might almost have been disposed to ask Jane to open the envelope herself and acquaint her with its contents, breaking them gently. Her reluctance was so obvious that Jane had to use pressure.

"Hadn't you better see what it's about, miss? The boy's waiting to see if there's an answer."

The troubled lady, taking the buff-coloured envelope in her unwilling fingers, stared at the pink slip of paper it had contained as if unable to decipher the words which were on it. They conveyed no meaning to her confused intelligence when she did.

"Letter posted to you yesterday written under extraordinary misunderstanding. Please consider it cancelled. Full explanation follows.—PETTIGREW, HARDING, AND BAINES."

That was the telegram. It was no wonder if Miss Hubert, in her then condition, regarded it as if it were so much double Dutch. In her calmest, clearest moments she might have been excused for finding its meaning a little hard to follow.

Left alone with the sheet of pink tissue, Miss Hubert still could not make head or tail of it. Her life had hitherto been so uneventful, each day being so like another, nothing happening to ruffle her tranquil existence—this sudden rush of the unusual had a more confusing effect upon her faculties than she would have thought was possible. That amazing afternoon upon the downs had always been somewhere at the back of her mind; she had always been conscious that it was there. It was the great landmark from which she dated all sorts of events. To use another metaphor, it was the magic philtre which leavened and changed the whole of her existence. And then, just as she was trying to tell herself that the memory of it was growing less, there had come those two letters—the one introducing the other. Since their appearance the world for her had been recreated. Earth, sea, and sky had assumed different hues. Familiar scenes were changed; even the people she knew best had been transformed—or perhaps she saw them through different eyes. Certainly something very strange had happened. So far as she remembered—and her memory was a good one—nothing exciting had happened in the whole of her life until, first, that adventure on the cliff, and then, when the excitement of that was passing away, came the letters.

They it was which had really done it, especially the one from Major David Carpenter. She had never been the same woman since his letter came—the full, frank, strange confession of what some mysterious influence had caused him to feel for her. It was true, what Ada had accused her of—she not only looked younger, she felt it. Rejuvenation, indeed, had played such pranks with her that it had even turned her head; destroyed that perfect mental balance on which she had prided herself; caused her, indeed, to lose her sense of proper feminine dignity and well-bred self-possession. Just as she was making a sincere attempt to regain what she regarded as her proper mental equilibrium had come the terse communication from Messrs. Pettigrew, Harding, and Baines—and right on top of that the bewildering telegram. Under such a stress of agitating events what was a forlorn, helpless woman to do? That was not an inquiry which she put to herself in so many words, but she was only too conscious that it was one which imperatively called for a reply. And Jane had gone down to tell the boy who had brought the message that there was no answer. Had she not better run after him and tell him there was? Had she not better telegraph to Ada and

ask for her assistance? That might necessitate her humbling herself, but, after all, her eldest sister was hard-headed, and at bottom not so hard-hearted as she chose to pretend; she might suggest something. Or should she wire to those lawyer men to say that she was coming up by the very next train for the promised explanation, for which she found it impossible to wait.

She had almost made up her mind that the latter course was the one she would pursue, when there came a knocking at the front door which so startled her that, as she stood with her hands pressed to her side, she was almost convinced that it shook the house. She was not accustomed to have people knock like that at her front door. The very violence of the onslaught suggested a further incursion into the realms of the unusual. What fresh shock was threatening?

Jane was answering the summons; she could hear her opening the front door. A voice addressed her; one which, though it was not unduly raised, had such an odd, penetrating power that what was said was distinctly audible upstairs—but then, only one flight of stairs led up to the sitting-room, and the front door was just at the foot.

"Does Miss Ethel Hubert live here?"

Somehow — there must be — it certainly was—what was it which set the listening woman in such a state of tremblement? She heard Jane's reply.

"Yes, sir; she does. What name shall I say?"

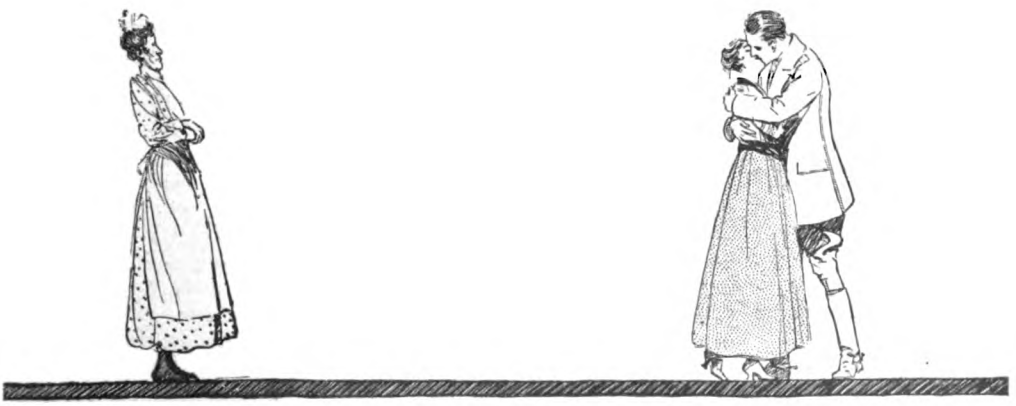
There was momentary silence, as if the caller were hesitating what to say. Then the same masculine voice was heard even more distinctly than at first:—

"Major David Carpenter."

The door of Miss Hubert's sitting-room was opened more rapidly, probably, than it had ever been before; a feminine figure went fluttering out, rushed down the stairs, and, before the astounded Jane had the faintest notion of what was about to happen, her mistress—whom she had always regarded as the pink of lady-like propriety—was in the caller's arms. She was crying in his arms, and he—tell it not in Gath!—was using a method of his own to wipe away her tears.

Possibly, if Jane had been aware that this was only the second occasion on which these two persons had met, and that they had never been introduced to each other at all, she might have regarded the whole episode as inconceivably scandalous. At any rate, Miss Hubert did not have to wait for an explanation of Major David Carpenter's letter; of how the lawyers had been rather in advance of facts in taking his decease for granted; of the rather vaguely-worded telegram; she did not, we say, have to wait for an explanation of these things till the arrival of Messrs. Pettigrew, Harding, and Baines's promised further communication, which reached her in due course of post. The gentleman went with the lady to her sitting-room and furnished her with all the necessary explanations there and then.

Major David Carpenter was married to Miss Ethel Hubert only the other day. So far, neither the bride nor bridegroom has allowed a hint to escape which might suggest what a romantic love story theirs has really been. Possibly they are a trifle afraid that what they regard as romance, other people might view from a standpoint of their own. Some folks have their own notions of what is scandalous.



Pages From My Life.

By

HILDA TREVELYAN.

WHEN ABOUT THREE YEARS OLD.

THE elusiveness of fleeting memories makes me nervous of attempting to record my early years. All that I seem to see, when I lift the curtain to peep at the youth we often so wistfully recall, is a plain, diminutive maiden, shy to a degree, anxious to be friends with anyone and everyone, but fearful of making advances.

I do not think I enjoyed any great popularity among other girls. Games interested me very little, but dolls were my delight. Not because, like other girls, I liked to play at little mother, dressing and undressing my "babies" at will, but because they were the only audience which seemed to appreciate my earliest efforts to qualify for the profession I ultimately entered.

Silently there my dollies would sit in a row on the chairs or couch, mute witnesses of the efforts of their tiny mistress, who loved nothing better than to "make-believe" that she was one of the great actresses whose names she but vaguely knew.

AS MOIRA, IN "LITTLE MARY."

Photo. Biograph Studio.

It has always seemed strange to me that, although I have never been able to trace a scrap of theatrical history in my family, I was born with a passion for acting.

I must candidly confess, however, that my parents—my mother was French, my father a Devonian, while I am a Cockney by birth and, I may add, by inclination—were by no means impressed with my play-acting efforts. They did not regard them seriously. They loved me far too much to wish me to experience the slings and arrows of stage life, of which, of course, in my innocence I knew nothing, and packed me off to school—the Ursuline Convent, Upton—where I had to turn my serious attention to lessons.

Judge of my delight, however, when I was allowed to take part in the little plays which the girls used to get up. I was

HILDA TREVELYAN AND HER HUSBAND, SYDNEY BLOW, IN "THE LITTLE MINISTER." LADY BABBIE WAS HER FIRST BARRIE PART.
From a Photo. by Langfier, Glasgow.

always reciting, and when I could do so in some character my delight knew no bounds. It is scarcely surprising in the circumstances that the stage fever grew in intensity.

My parents, finding their counsels did not prevail, ultimately agreed that I should try my luck in the theatre.

Thus it came about that I went from the convent straight on to the stage. Of course, there is nothing very remarkable in that, for quite a number of actresses have come from convent schools. Still, it *was* rather a jump from the convent to musical comedy and the "fit-up" company with which I made my first appearance.

I should have said that I went *almost* straight from the convent on to the stage, for after leaving school there was a brief and dismal period during which I haunted agents' offices. I did not know a soul in theatreland, and I was still in short frocks. If anything could have cured me of the stage fever, those wearisome quests for an engagement should have done so. Hour after hour, day after day, I sat in agents' offices. No one seemed to take the slightest notice of the tiny individual who was burning to play great parts, but who was too timid to make her voice heard.

I was in despair. Then suddenly a brilliant idea occurred to me. I was too dowdy. My personal appearance did not attract attention like that of other girls. So I went out and bought a new hat, more suitable for a woman of twenty-five or thirty than a girl of fifteen in short frocks. Then I returned to the agent's office.

"Good heavens! What's that?" I can almost hear him saying, as he stood looking at me. My object was gained. I had attracted his marked attention. Whether it was the ability which I said I possessed or the desire on his part to get rid of me, I cannot say. But I ultimately walked from his office proud in the

AS WENDY, IN "PETER PAN."
Photo. Ellis & Walery.

knowledge that I was now a full-grown actress, engaged to appear in a "fit-up" company—that is, a company that carries all its scenery, except footlights and curtains, about with it and plays on improvised stages in halls and concert-rooms. But I was very proud that I had made a real start.

I remember on one occasion our stage was the cover of a huge corn-bin in the exchange of a small provincial town. The stairs were so narrow that we could not get the piano up. So it remained on the stairs and gave selections outside the hall while we performed inside.

We started, however, at a theatre, and I began my stage career with a speaking part. It was a very small part, and I was very proud of it. Candour compels me to add that I was not given this part because I had impressed the manager by my intelligence, but simply and solely because the only dress available for the *rôle* happened to fit me and nobody else.

AS MAGGIE, IN "WHAT EVERY WOMAN KNOWS"—HER FAVOURITE PART.
Photo. Rita Martin.

AS CINDERELLA, IN SIR J. M. BARRIE'S LATEST PLAY.
Photo. Rita Martin.

The girl who was cast for the part threw it up, and as her clothes happened to fit me I got my chance. It was hard work in those days, but I was very happy, simply because I had attained my heart's desire.

I suppose the first important step in my career was the engagement to play Lady Babbie in "The Little Minister" on tour. I might mention that I toured with the northern company, and thus had the very interesting experience of playing "The Little Minister"

at Dundee, near Thrums, Kirriemuir, where Sir James Barrie was born. And never did I play to a more enthusiastic audience.

One very amazing incident in connection with "The Little Minister" occurs to me at the moment. It will be remembered that in the character of Babbie I appear on the stage with bare feet. One night we were playing in a Scottish town. In one of the scenes with the Little Minister, when the hero came to the words, "I shall buy you a silk dress, black, with beads on it," the silence of the theatre was broken by a loud voice which cried :—

"You'd better buy her a pair o' socks first!"

At that time I did not, of course, imagine for one moment that Barrie characters would play such an important part in my career. After the finish of the tour I appeared in a variety of parts, and the real turning-point came one Sunday night when I appeared in a play produced by the Stage Society, entitled "'Op-o'-me-Thumb." It was such a hit that Sir George (then Mr.) Alexander put it on at the St. James's Theatre. My part as Moira with Sir John Hare in "Little Mary" followed, and then came a great event in my life when I undertook the *rôle* of Wendy in "Peter Pan."

I first played Wendy at Christmas, 1904, and took up the part in many subsequent revivals. I suppose there is no character in modern play or pantomime which has such a fascination for children as Wendy, not even excepting Peter, and I still treasure the many love-letters I received from the "kiddies." What naïve and charming epistles they are! Turning them over as I write, I think the one which tickled me most was that from a little boy who wrote :—

"I love you, Wendy; how far can you climb up a tree?"

I am afraid his admiration would have been tinged with contempt had he discovered that Wendy only once tried to climb a tree and fell down after getting up about three feet.

I had many invitations from youngsters to visit them, but was obliged to decline, for there is little time for visiting when one is playing twelve performances a week and practically living at the theatre.

There was one occasion, however, when I broke my usual rule, and it was on account of a letter addressed from 50A —— Street, Hyde Park, W.

"Dear Wendy," it ran, "I think you are awfully ripping. Will you come and have tea with me on Tuesday next at five o'clock? Mamma says you may teach me how to fly after tea. So do come. I do so want to fly. Yours truly, JACK.

"Please come in your nightgown."

It was written in a childish, bold hand, and it was lying in an envelope on my dressing-table one night during the first season of "Peter Pan."

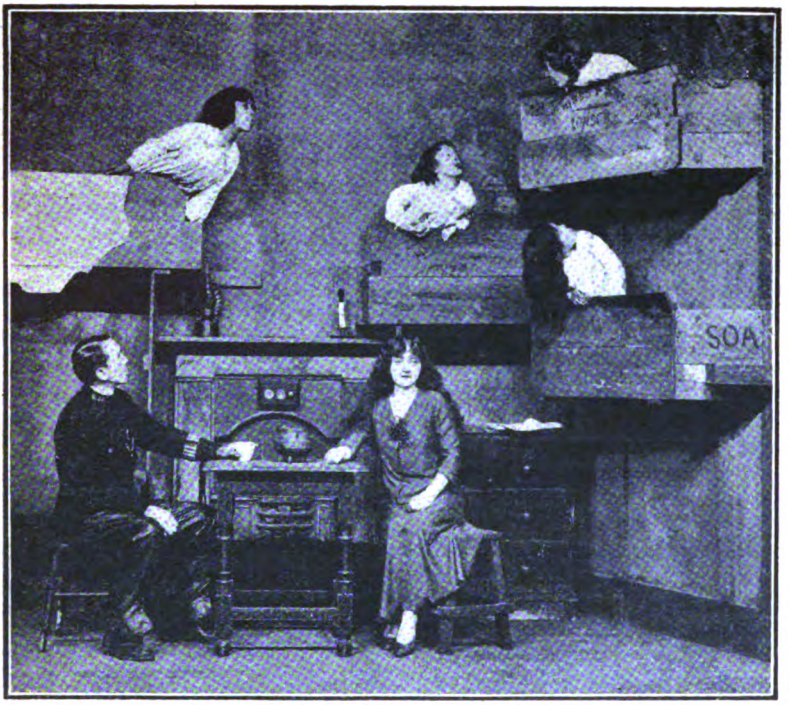
I was so delighted with the letter that when Tuesday came I knocked at the door of 50A —— Street, Hyde Park, punctually at the appointed time. The front door opened, and I heard a shrill voice crying out, "I do believe it's Wendy!"

I entered and a small, fair-haired boy of six rushed to the door, but directly he saw a little lady in a long dress with a train, a toque of black fox, and really a frightfully fascinating stole, he took to his heels and fled. His mamma, who was going to allow me to teach Master Jack to fly after tea, received me. But the nursery tea was one of the saddest children's teas I've ever partaken of. Jack kept his eyes on his bib. The latter was beautifully embroidered in red and blue with a motto, "Eager to Eat," which rather gave away the fact that Master Jack was fond of his food. But that tea-time no food passed Jack's lips and not a word would he speak. If only I had gone in the nightgown with my little bedroom slippers and my hair down, it would have been just as Jack had planned it.

"But they wouldn't have allowed her on the bus," as Jack's mamma expressed it, when she tried to explain. But no. Explanations were useless. Jack would have none of me. I've been a tragedy in little Jack's life, I'm sure. It made me so sad. I've disillusioned Jack's belief in fairies, and it's been all my fault.

To my mind a Barrie part is like nothing else in the world. And I most certainly enjoy playing "mothering" parts, like Cinders, in "A Kiss for Cinderella," which, I think, is the fifth important "mothering" character I have portrayed.

There was Wendy, for instance, which I have played over eight hundred times—the sweet-natured, big-hearted little person who mothered everyone in "Peter Pan." Then there was Moira, who pulled the strings for everyone's benefit in "Little Mary." Maggie, in "What Every Woman Knows," was another Wendy sort of person, and even managed a stage crowd; while as Gwennie Llewellyn I mothered everyone, including my mother, in the Welsh play, "Little Miss Llewellyn."



HILDA TREVELYAN AND GERALD DU MAURIER IN ONE OF THE MOST DELIGHTFUL SCENES FROM "A KISS FOR CINDERELLA."
Photo. Foulsham & Banfield.

I have sometimes been asked if I am fond of mothering or managing people off the stage as well as on it. I really do not think I am any more motherly by nature than the average woman is, or, at least, should be. Every woman has, or ought to have, the mothering instinct, which is one of the most beautiful parts of feminine nature. Of one thing I am certain, and that is that the most successful wives are those who mother their husbands. The strongest and most essentially masculine men really thoroughly enjoy being managed occasionally.

When talking of such parts, however, I am not forgetful of the many other plays in which I have appeared. "A Chinese Honeymoon," "A Single Man," "Mrs. Dane's Defence," "Trelawney of the Wells," "'Op-o'-me-Thumb," "Peter's Mother," "Little Miss Llewellyn," "The Schoolmistress," and "Chains"—to mention a few. But no characters seem to have such a fascination for me as Lady Babbie, Wendy, Moira, Tweeny, in "The Admirable Crichton"; Maggie Wylie, in "What Every Woman Knows"; Kate, in "The Twelve-Pound Look"; and Cinders.

There is subtle, indefinable charm about these characters. Speaking as an actress, they are so delightful that one slips into them as if into a very dear and cosy frock, and feels comfortable and at home at once.

"Wendy," says Peter Pan, when he comes into the Darlings' nursery in search of his shadow, "Wendy, one girl is more use than twenty boys." And it is the girl-woman who, like Peter, never grows up that seems to bring these characters so near the hearts of women.

The mothering ways of Cinderella in "A Kiss for Cinderella," whose motto, "Trust in the Lord; every other person cash!" is one of the shrewdest of her many shrewd sayings, are too delightful for words. Her brave way of doing her "little bit," by looking after four children—one English, two Allies, and one enemy; the way she "does" for Bodie, because wealthier folk have "cut her off" in war-time as a luxury; her ambition to go on the stage, and the ultimate finding of her Prince Charming in the policeman, all go to make a character the fascination of which might be compared to that of Wendy.

Sammy was present at the first night of "A Kiss for Cinderella." Sammy is my black cat who always attends my first nights, and whom I have regarded for the last nine years as my mascot. He really seems to understand every word I say, and although, of course, I cannot give his opinion of my Barrie parts, I am sure he would be very disappointed if I did not include him in this article. Hence the mention of Sammy. It has been suggested that he should make his *début* as Cinderella's cat at Wyndham's; but Sammy is incorrigibly lazy and, so far as I can judge, prefers the quiet and ease of the fireside to strenuousness behind the footlights.

Though both Wendy and Cinderella are

very dear to me, and I have the greatest affection for Tweeny in "The Admirable Crichton," I think I may say that Maggie Wylie, or, as she becomes later in the play, Maggie Shand, in "What Every Woman Knows," is my favourite part.

I remember an amusing incident, by the way, during the long run of "What Every Woman Knows." My rival for my husband's affection has to say to me: "Oh, I dare say you are fond of him, too, but he and I were made for each other from the beginning of all time."

One night, the actress having delivered this assertion, there came from some man in the audience the stentorian comment:—

"I *don't* think!"

It upset me so much that I could scarcely go on.

A part after my own heart, too, was Gwennie Llewellyn, in "Little Miss Llewellyn," a play with which I embarked on management in conjunction with Mr. Edmund Gwenn at the Vaudeville Theatre four years ago. I first saw the play in Paris, and thought it would just suit me if it were adapted. Curiously enough, Mr. Gwenn saw it, too, and thought the father's part, Enos Llewellyn, would suit him. And when we were offered the play and at the same time found we could get the Vaudeville Theatre, it seemed as though fate had got everything ready for me to go into management.

There had been Welsh operettas and Welsh plays in the past; but in "Little Miss Llewellyn" we decided to present for the first time to the British public a real company of Welsh players. The locale was essentially Welsh, in order that there might be that keen differentiation between the ways of the Welsh in their country strongholds and the manners and customs of the Londoner, or "foreigner," as they call him.

HILDA TREVELYAN IN PRIVATE LIFE.
Photo. Rita Martin.

Many people thought that I, too, was Welsh, and perhaps, in the circumstances, the remark of one galleryite was excusable. "Well," he was overheard to say, "she's Welsh, and she's been ashamed to own it before, and now she can't help herself." And it was another enthusiastic "god" who paid the play a tribute by saying, "I like the piece, but I thought I should have seen her in a 'comical' hat." Evidently he meant conical Welsh hat.

And now what else can I tell you? As I said in "Little Miss Llewellyn," "As we are here to talk, let us talk, look you." Buttalk, to be interesting, depends on the subject. In this case I fear it is in danger of becoming a bore. So let us pass to something else. After all, the play's the thing. Don't you think so?

The CASTAWAYS.

By

W. W. JACOBS.

Illustrated by Will Owen.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE inspection of the yacht was so satisfactory that Carstairs made up his mind on the spot, and for the next month or two had many pleasant jaunts to Southampton to mark progress. Members of the expedition spent the time in providing things for the voyage according to their several tastes; the fact that Albert had laid in a stock of three mouth-organs and a tin whistle coming in for much adverse comment on the part of Mr. Biggs.

The *Starlight* weighed anchor on a fine morning in early October. A light breeze and a slight touch of autumn in the air added to the enjoyment of the voyagers, whose numbers were now increased by an unnecessarily good-looking young doctor named Maloney, and Miss Flack, a spinster of mature years and lifelong friend of Mrs. Jardine. Seated in little groups on deck, Mr. Carstairs' guests, idly watching the passing craft, looked forward with some zest to a life of exciting but harmless adventure. The doctor, who had made several voyages, was pleased to find himself regarded as an authority on all things nautical, and was at once elevated to a position from which the other men sought in vain to remove him.

"I should have thought the sea was the worst place in the world for a man of your profession," remarked Knight, after listening to one or two episodes.

The doctor stroked a very fine moustache. "Why?" he inquired.

"No practice," was the reply.

"You're wrong," said Maloney. "It's what I come to sea for. Suppose I was ashore and you had got to lose a leg, say. Would you come to me?"

"I would not," said Knight, bluntly.

"Exactly," said Maloney, nodding. "But you've got no choice here. That's where I have you. If you get anything wrong with you, you don't turn over the Medical Directory and pick out your man; you come to me. And you can't upset my diagnosis. That's a great thing. That's a comforting thing."

"For whom?" inquired Peplow, seriously.

"All of us," said Maloney, lowering his voice as two of the ladies passed. "If you pass away because I treat you for muscular rheumatism by removing your appendix, it's much better for your peace of mind—to say nothing of my own—you shouldn't know that but for a pardonable error you might have lived another fifty years."

Mr. Peplow shuddered. "Are you an Irishman?" he inquired, thoughtfully.

The other shook his head. "Not since my grandfather," he replied. "When I was born the brogue got mislaid. Besides, I am too serious-minded for an Irishman."

"I never have any use for a doctor," said Knight, casually; "but if I had I should choose a man of some age."

"I'm just the right age," said Maloney. "Thirty; just young enough to be interesting, and just old enough to know how to."

He strolled off with a smile and dropping into a chair between Miss Seacombe and Miss Blake, just vacated by Mrs. Jardine, at once proceeded to verify his statement.

"Who shipped that chap?" demanded Knight, turning to Pope.

"Carstairs," was the reply. "He said that he reminded him of you. Jolly chap; knows

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his job, too. He's got a splendid lot of instruments; I have seen them."

"You'll see them again," said Knight, solemnly. "Mark my words if you don't. What a romantic end to a useful and well-spent life, to be buried at sea a thousand miles from land!"

It was a matter for congratulation that when they emerged from the shelter of the Isle of Wight they found the Channel as smooth as the proverbial mill-pond. The evening air was bracing and just cool enough to make the change to the warm dining-room acceptable. Half-way through the meal Mr. Pope paid a heartfelt tribute to the cook, warmly seconded by Mr. Peplow.

"It must be a beautifully built ship," said Miss Flack; "there is absolutely no motion."

"And not at all stuffy," said Mrs. Jardine.

"It is difficult to realize that we are at sea," said Pope, looking around.

"It is a difficulty that time will solve," said the doctor. "I had the same difficulty myself once, and twelve hours later I thought that I was in a boat-swing that fancied itself a roundabout."

"Did it—did it upset your digestion?" inquired Miss Flack, delicately.

"It did not," said the doctor. "It upset my head."

"Vertigo," explained Pope, with a wise nod.

"Edge of the fore-scuttle," corrected the doctor, "and one of the hands who was coming up at the time. He got a very interesting case of concussion. He'd have been in bed till the end of the voyage if the second mate hadn't taken the case out of my hands. He used a counter-irritant in the shape of two clumps on the head. I did think of sending an account of the case to the *Lancet*."

Miss Flack looked mystified. "How interesting!" she murmured, and turned with some relief to help herself to trifle.

The next two days passed with equal serenity, a condition of things for which, judging from their remarks, his gratified guests seemed to hold Carstairs responsible. Reading, conversation, and games made the time pass pleasantly enough, the devotion of Mr. Knight to law books of a singularly uninviting appearance calling for much surprised comment. It was whispered—by the admiring Mrs. Ginnell—that he was going to read for the Bar on his return to England, but after one morning during which a lot of silly people, including several old enough to know better, walked round and round the ship in line for the pleasure of passing him on tip-toe and saying "*H'sh!*" as they approached, he threw up his studies in disgust.

He awoke on the fourth day at sea to find his bunk out of the horizontal and a floor which was never in the same place for two seconds together. He shaved himself carefully and, grinning with anticipation, went on deck. The fresh morning air, with a touch of rain in it, was delightful, but the sea was of a dirty brown and the sky overcast. The deck looked wet and desolate; the bows rose and fell again with a resounding slap.

"Dirty weather?" he inquired of the boatswain, who was passing.

"Not yet, sir," was the reply, "but I fancies as we shall get it in the Bay. If I was you, sir, I should eat all I could stow away to-day."

"Oh, I'm all right," said Knight, sharply. "I was thinking of the others—the ladies."

Mr. Tarn nodded, and turned to gaze with some interest at Miss Mudge, who, appearing hastily from the companion, passed them in a series of little tottering runs. Between runs she stood swaying to and fro in an effort to regain her balance and gazing with much distaste at the tumbling seas. The boatswain, with a deprecatory glance at Knight, stepped up to her and steadied her with a powerful arm about her waist. She turned with a faint scream.

"All right," he said, reassuringly, "I've got you; you're quite safe."

"Safe!" repeated Miss Mudge. "You're choking the life out of me. I thought the machinery had got hold of me."

"I thought you was going to fall," said the boatswain, letting out a reef. "Is that better?"

Miss Mudge's head dropped to his shoulder and her eyes half closed. He led her to a seat and sat down, still supporting her, until an angry bark from the bridge sent him about his business. Deprived of his support, moral and physical, the girl arose and, steering an erratic course for the companion, disappeared below.

Seats at the breakfast-table began to empty before the conclusion of the performance. The dining-saloon had suddenly become stuffy and odorous, the smell of fried engine oil being particularly noticeable. Bulkheads creaked, and articles on the table became endowed with movement.

"We shall have to have the fiddles rigged for lunch, I expect," said Tollhurst.

"There is a little bit of a sea on," said Pope, as he arose and assisted Mrs. Ginnell

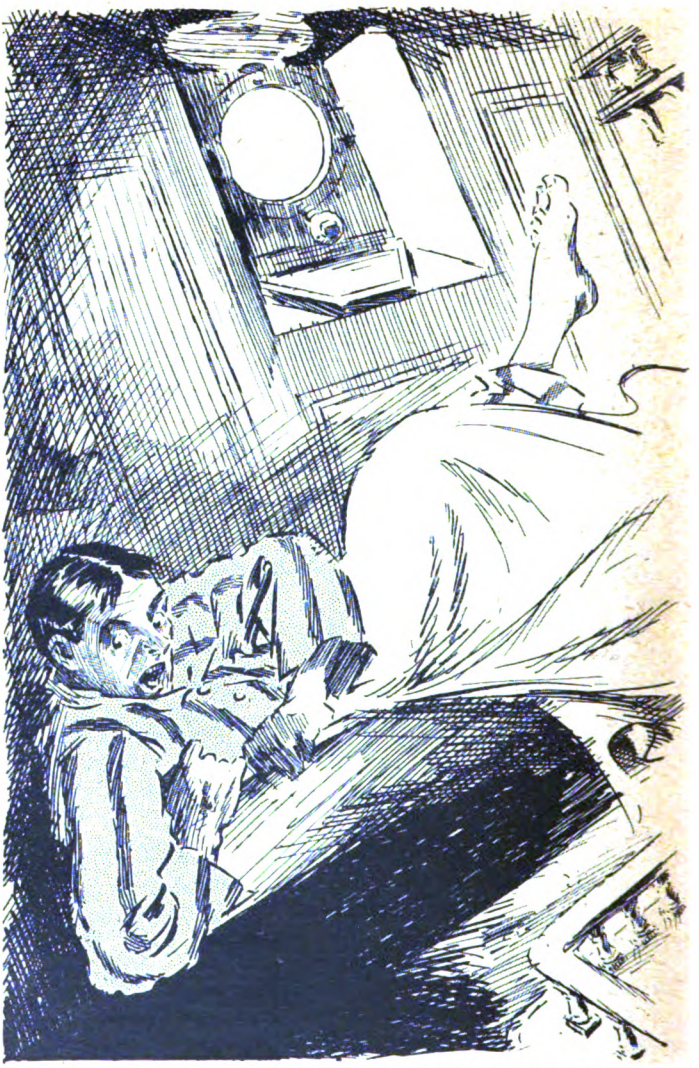
to the door. "Perhaps I had better help you to your cabin."

The couple disappeared, followed with longing eyes by Markham. The understewards, jealous of his authority, watched him gloatingly. Pale of face and compressed of lip, he stuck to his post wondering whether he could endure to the end.

"I feel unwell," said Carstairs, rising suddenly, "and I don't care who knows it," he added, looking at the grinning faces before him. "Markham, you are feeling it, too. You had better get to your bunk. There will be quite enough left to—to look after—the survivors."

He vanished with some precipitancy, followed by the butler. Mrs. Jardine, the only lady left, rose from her chair and with an undisturbed mien went off to the drawing-room. The men went up to the smoke-room and lit cigarettes. Through the doorway on the leeward side they caught glimpses of white-topped seas scurrying past. Mr. Peplow, to observe them better, left the smoke-room and did a stately cake walk to the side, where he remained, heedless of the rain and spray.

"We are going right into it," observed the doctor, returning from a visit to the doorway.



"HE AWOKE ON THE FOURTH DAY AT SEA TO FIND HIS BUNK OUT OF THE HORIZONTAL, AND A FLOOR WHICH WAS NEVER IN THE SAME PLACE FOR TWO SECONDS TOGETHER."

Talwyn stared at him disagreeably. "Going into it? We are in it, aren't we?" he demanded.

"Not on the edge of it yet," replied the doctor, cheerfully.

Talwyn grunted and, regarding his cigarette with some disfavour, threw it away. Then, muttering something in his pocket-handkerchief, he got up and went out. Within ten minutes the doctor was alone.

The wind increased as the day wore on, and at luncheon Mrs. Jardine, his only companion, rose before the meal was finished and, with a look equally compounded of surprise and indignation, quitted the saloon. By next morning it was blowing a gale, which continued with unabated violence throughout the day.

It was not until the day after that that Mr. Knight, who had been keeping body and soul together with judicious doses of brandy and water, swung his feet over the edge of the bunk and lowered himself slowly to the floor. His neglected watch had stopped, and he was even in some doubt as to the day of the week. He opened the door, and clutching at anything that offered support, made his way to Mr. Peplow's cabin and sank exhausted on the velvet settee.

"Halloa!" said Mr. Peplow, feebly,

turning a dull eye on him. "What do you want?"

"Bright and entertaining society," retorted Knight, with weak ferocity.

His friend made no reply, but, turning away, closed his eyes and tried to forget his troubles in sleep. Knight, lying on the settee, listened drearily to the creaking of timbers, the distant crash of crockery from the stewards' pantry, and the monotonous sound of the bilge as it washed to and fro. The door opened and the horrible reek of a cigar assailed his nostrils. He turned a languid head to see Maloney standing in the doorway.

"Just had a look into your cubby-hole," he said, entering. "Thought perhaps you had gone overboard."

"Take—it—away," said Knight.

The doctor looked puzzled. "Oh, the cigar!" he said, with a laugh. "I'll hold it outside the door. It's one of Pope's best. He has just given me the box. Says he never wants to see one again."

"What's—time?" inquired Knight, with an effort.

"Just gone four. Are you going to get up?"

"Where are — the — others?" inquired Knight.

"All in bed except two," was the reply. "I've had my hands full, I can tell you. There's still a big sea running. Miss Seacombe describes it as mountainous."

"Is—is she up?" inquired Knight, starting.

"And Mrs. Ginnell," said Maloney. "Both made an effort and got up to breakfast. Slight relapse after breakfast, but turned up to lunch. They've got ten times the pluck of the men. I've got 'em both up on deck wrapped up in shawls in lounge chairs."

Knight groaned, and putting his feet to the floor got up and looked out at the port-hole. With another groan he returned to the settee.

"Don't you worry about them," said Maloney, gently; "they're all right. I'm reading poetry to them."

"Poetry?" gasped Knight.

"Keats," said the other, nodding. "It's Miss Seacombe's favourite. After dinner I'm going to give her some of my own. I shall tell her it's Shelley. There's one little thing of mine——"

"Oh, go to blazes!" moaned the indignant Knight. "Are they strapped in their chairs?"

"They are not," said the doctor. "If you had ever heard me read poetry you would not ask me that question. Why not make an effort and get up and come and hear me? It's only a question of will-power."

"Go away," said Knight.

"Talk to yourself firmly. Say over six times: 'I *will* be a man; I will not lie about like a dying duck in a thunderstorm in pink pyjamas with blue stripes undone at the neck.'"

"This—is the doctor—Freddie," observed Knight, bitterly.

"Send him away," faltered Mr. Peplow.

"It's curing you I would be," said the doctor. "Trying to shame you into your trousers. I cured a man of the sea-sickness once by sitting on his diaphragm. It was the indignity of the thing that he didn't like. In the wild desire to kill one of the best doctors in England he forgot all about his illness."

Knight closed his eyes.

"Well, I must be going," continued Maloney. "I mustn't keep the ladies waiting. I suppose you haven't got a voice-lozenge about you?"

He took two or three sharp puffs at his cigar, which had nearly gone out, and vanished in a cloud of malodorous smoke.

There was a long silence, broken only by a faint moan from Mr. Peplow. Then Knight, fired by the story of the owner of the outraged diaphragm, rose unsteadily to his feet and tottered back to his cabin. A small figure, lying on its back on his settee with its knees drawn up, eyed him wanly.

"*Albert!*" exclaimed the astonished Knight.

The boy pointed a trembling finger at a siphon of soda which was rolling about on the floor with a broken plate and some dry biscuits. As a defence it seemed incomplete.

"Then I had—to—lay down," said Albert, with a shudder.

He turned over on his left side, drew his knees up to his chin, and composed himself to slumber. By a great effort Knight managed to retrieve a couple of biscuits and the soda and cut his foot on the broken plate. A stiff peg of brandy and soda, together with the biscuits, helped to revive him. He took his clothes from the floor and, with trembling fingers, proceeded to dress himself.

He gained the deck with some difficulty and, swaying with weakness, stood holding on to a rail. After the atmosphere below the strong, clean air was delicious, and he did his best to ignore the heaving seas and a couple of performing fishing-boats. Slowly and carefully he made his way aft to the sheltered spot where Maloney was reading to his fair patients.

A little delighted exclamation from Mrs. Ginnell and a smile from Miss Seacombe greeted his arrival. Mutual congratulations were exchanged.

"He had better have your chair," said Miss Seacombe to the reader.

The doctor arose and Knight, having by dint of skilful balancing taken the chair without mishap, bestowed a smile, right and left, on his fair companions. It was returned with interest, and Mrs. Ginnell, taking possession of his left hand, patted it affectionately.

"He has got the turn now, I think," said the doctor, regarding him with a professional eye. "I have done my part; all he wants now is careful nursing."

Knight, still weak and dizzy, looked at the volume of poems in the other's hand and smiled maliciously.

"Page fifty-seven," said Maloney, thrusting it into his hand, "fourth line. Take it easy to begin with and don't strain your voice. It's time I went off and looked after the other poor sufferers."

CHAPTER XIV.

A SOMEWHAT disillusioned Mrs. Jardine appeared at the breakfast-table next morning, but until the ship arrived at Gibraltar most of the company preferred to take their meals in their cabins. Flying visits to the deck were made by one or two members, but like the trial-flights of nestlings they were of short duration; Mr. Pope on one occasion having to suffer the indignity of being helped back to his nest by Albert.

The stability of Gibraltar gave universal satisfaction, and it was felt that Great Britain had deserved well of her citizens by acquiring it. Delightful to know that when you put your foot down there was something there to meet it.

The Rock left behind, they came in for an unbroken spell of fine weather. Port after port helped to break the monotony of life on shipboard, and Carstairs noted with pleasure the good-fellowship prevailing between his guests. Only Knight and Peplow, conferring apart, had occasion to describe the smiling good-nature of Lady Penrose and Mrs. Jardine as barefaced duplicity.

"They have never paid me so much attention," said Knight, bitterly.

Mr. Peplow groaned.

"I'm a sort of human magnet," continued his friend. "Yesterday afternoon the smoke-room was empty and I took Winifred in to see me smoke a cigarette. Lady Penrose came in to witness the performance two minutes later, and within a quarter of an hour I was the centre of an admiring circle of five."

"And Talwyn was with me," said Mr. Peplow. "That is to say, he was boring Effie with his conversation, and I went to the rescue."

"And when you are boring her, he comes to the rescue," said Knight. "The whole fact of the matter is, this ship is too small; but even ashore I get a large following. That chap Tollhurst is trying to make himself amiable to Lady Penrose. He hangs about her like a shadow, and when she is not on guard over me he takes over her duties. Wonder where Talwyn picked him up?"

Mr. Peplow shook his head. "Don't matter where he was picked up," he murmured; "trouble is, he is here."

"What is it?" asked Maloney, sauntering up. "A mothers' meeting? or a Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society? Why aren't you in the smoke-room? Pope is doing card-tricks. He is standing with his eyes shut to show there is no deception, while we draw cards. The opportunity was too much for my politeness. He has muffed two tricks already."

"You have set a bad example," said Knight, as Miss Blake, followed by Talwyn, slipped furtively out of the smoke-room and went forward.

Mr. Peplow followed his friend's glance, and in a careless fashion started to move off.

"No," said the doctor, shaking his head. "Better not."

Mr. Peplow drew himself up and stared at him.

"Wrong tactics," said the unmoved doctor. "Let her get fed up with him."

Mr. Peplow, fiery red in colour, turned and looked appealingly at Knight.

"And miss you," continued Maloney. "Cake is a nice thing, but one can have too much of it. Let her go without it for a day."

"I don't understand you," said Peplow, with great dignity. "Cake!"

"Or anything else sweet and wholesome," replied the doctor, looking him over. "You be guided by me. I've seen a lot of this sort of thing. Taken a hand in it, too, when I was young. Oh, I know just what's going on, and watching it gives me a lot of quiet pleasure in the few moments I can snatch from my duties. It's no use getting stuffy; I can't help having an observant eye, any more than I can help interfering in lost causes. All big natures are like that."

Mr. Peplow was saved a reply by the appearance of Pope from the smoke-room. His voice came booming along the deck.

"Of course the trick failed," he complained. "When you tell a man to draw a card and put it back, and he puts it in his pocket instead and disappears, the thing's impossible. Where's that doctor?"

"Time for me to disappear," said Maloney. "I never attempt to defend an impossible position. Come down in my cabin and have a chat. Subject: Dowagers and how to circumvent 'em."

He disappeared, and Knight and Peplow after a moment's hesitation followed.

The doctor's subject was one that might have been of interest to Miss Mudge, who had been for some time suffering from the unwelcome chaperonage of Miss Flack. Miss Mudge would have been the first to admit that she came in for an undue amount of attention; what she would not admit was that she required any assistance in dealing with it. Besieged by the engine-room, the forecastle, and the steward's pantry, she more than held her own—a fact which only increased the ardour of the victims.

At meal-times she was free. The deck was empty and the passengers below. At such times, with a book for use and some needlework for show, it was her practice to lead the way to the bows, followed by some delighted seaman carrying a deck-chair. At lunch-time on the day following Mr. Pope's card-tricks the chair of state was borne by Mr. Tarn, the boatswain. Not by happy chance, but owing to a few plain words aimed at a couple of hands who were hanging about waiting to perform the office instead of going on with their work. "How's that?" he inquired, planting the chair.

Miss Mudge arranged herself and let fall a ball of wool, which the boatswain pursued. He returned winding up the slack.

"The other side, I think," said the girl, rising.

Mr. Tarn made the adjustment, and, stroking a yellow moustache, stood watching her with a world of patient devotion in his fine blue eyes.

"Wonderful pleasant, ain't it?" he ventured at last.

Miss Mudge yawned. "Rather boring," she said. "Nothing seems to happen at sea."

"But you've been ashore," said the boatswain.

"Oh, yes, I've been ashore," said the girl, languidly, "but it isn't like England, you know. I don't call it civilized. I am not used to roughing it."

"IT WAS HER PRACTICE TO LEAD THE WAY TO THE BOWS, FOLLOWED BY SOME DELIGHTED SEAMAN CARRYING A DECK-CHAIR."

"Anybody could see that—with half an eye," said the boatswain. "The first time I see you, I says to the carpenter, 'That's a dainty little piece o' goods,' I says."

"And what did he say?" inquired Miss Mudge, carelessly.

The boatswain was not prepared for the question. "It don't matter what 'e said," he replied, guardedly, "but I told 'im if ever he said it agin I'd give him something for himself he'd remember all his lifetime."

Miss Mudge's languor disappeared. "I don't like sailors," she said, tartly. "I

suppose they have to go to sea because nobody will employ them ashore."

"There's sailormen and sailormen," said the boatswain, tenderly; "there's me, and there's the carpenter. Are you keeping company with anybody? I'm not."

The girl shook her head and half-closed her eyes. "Certainly not," she said, slowly. "I don't like men. Heaps and heaps have asked me, but I've always said 'No.' I prefer my liberty."

The boatswain gazed at her with ardour. "Perhaps you haven't met the right one," he said, hopefully.

There was no reply, and he ventured a little closer. The second mate was on the bridge, a man of kindly nature and tolerant views. Moreover, he was out of earshot.

"Why don't you come for'ard a bit oftener?" breathed the boatswain.

"Come forward? What for?" inquired the girl, bending over a stocking she was darning.

Mr. Tarn came a little closer still. "Ter see me," he said, tenderly.

"*Phh!* I see quite enough of you," was the reply. "Besides, you're the sort of man that looks best a long way off."

The boatswain drew back, gasping. The little bit of broken looking-glass nailed to the side of his bunk told a much more flattering tale. He gazed at the fluffy head bent over its work and tried again.

"'Sides which," he said, slowly, "there's more breeze for'ard, and if there's anything to see you see it fust, and—and—— Why, your little shoe's undone!"

He knelt down to adjust it, just as a sharp cough sounded from behind. He turned his head to see Mr. Markham emerging from the smoke-room.

"Pore stooard," he said, as the butler approached; "he's got a cold, ain't he? Or p'r'aps it's a fish-bone stuck in 'is throat. Well, he ought to wait till they've finished."

"You've no business talking to lady passengers, bos'n," said the butler, sharply.

"You're right, matey," retorted Mr. Tarn. "This ain't bisness, it's pleasure. I'm teaching the lady 'ow to tie knots; she won't undo this not if she tries for hours and hours."

"What?" exclaimed the girl, sharply.

"When you want to take 'em off," said the boatswain, beaming at her as he rose to his feet, "you come to me. You come to me every morning to do 'em up and every night to undo 'em. Bless you, I like work. Here, I'll darn that for you."

"Bos'n, you forget yourself," cried the butler, as Miss Mudge drew back quickly.

"What, ain't you gone yet?" inquired Mr. Tarn, with affected surprise. "What about washing up them plates and licking the grease off the knives? Don't look like that; you'll break something."

"I wish you two would go away and quarrel somewhere else," said the gratified Miss Mudge. "How do you think I can get on with my work?"

"What's the matter?" inquired Mr. Biggs, who had just sidled up. "Are these men annoying you?"

"They make me nervous," said Miss Mudge. "I'm so afraid there'll be bloodshed."

"Butler," said Mr. Biggs, gravely, "you ought to be below; your engines'll stop if you neglect your stoking like this. I looked down through the skylight as I passed, and I saw the furnace-doors all open in a row waiting for you to shove your burnt-offerings into 'em."

"I don't want any of your vulgarity," returned the butler, hotly. "That's not the way to speak of your master and his friends."

"Get off to your duty, my man," said Mr. Biggs. "I shouldn't like you to lose your job—you'd never get another. And I *was* going to tell the bos'n that the first officer wants a word with him, but I don't think I will."

The boatswain, with a languishing glance, withdrew somewhat hastily, and Mr. Biggs, leaning against the side with his back to the butler, bent over Miss Mudge. Mr. Markham, after a short inward struggle, returned to his duties.

"You'll cause a lot of trouble if you're not careful," said Biggs.

"Me?" said the girl, plaintively. "I'm sure I can't help it. You don't think I want to be pestered out of my life by a parcel of silly men, do you? I'd much rather be alone. I don't want to talk to anybody. I want to sit quiet."

Her companion coughed. "The idea of the bos'n worrying you with his silly talk!" he said, after a pause. "Cheek!"

"It's no sillier than what I am used to," said Miss Mudge, resignedly. "He's no worse than the others. I rather like him in a way; he reminds me of a friend of mine who's a sailor. Leastways, he's an engineer—a real engineer."

"What do you mean by a 'real' engineer?" demanded Biggs, somewhat shortly.

"Why, a proper engineer," replied the girl. "A gentleman who has got certificates and passed examinations, and all that sort of thing."

Mr. Biggs controlled himself by an effort;

experience had taught him the danger of displaying temper. He smiled loftily.

"There's not much to learn in a ship's engines," he said. "I know about all there is to know already. But I shall stick to cars. The sea wouldn't do for me; I'm fond of home."

"HE RAISED THE MOUTH-ORGAN AND PLAYED 'HOME, SWEET HOME,' WITH VARIATIONS AND MUCH FEELING."

"But—but you might get married some day," objected the girl.

"Well?" said the other, staring.

"And then it would be much nicer for everybody if you went to sea. I'm sure your wife would like it better."

Mr. Biggs had another inward struggle, and the issue was still undecided when Albert, appearing at the door of the smoke-room, came slowly forward and sat down on the deck a couple of yards from them. The chauffeur glared at him in disgust, and a smothered exclamation broke from him as the boy drew a mouth-organ from his pocket and gave it a preparatory wipe on his sleeve.

"Run away," growled Biggs.

Albert shook his head. "I've as much right to be here as what you have," he said. "I've put the things straight in the smoke-room, and Mr. Markham said I could come out and amuse myself. What piece would you like?"

He put the instrument to his lips, and the strains of "A Life on the Ocean Wave" floated over the placid sea. His eyes were half-closed with the ecstasy of the artiste, but nevertheless he kept a shrewd watch on the movements of the palpitating Mr. Biggs.

"Now you run off," repeated Mr. Biggs, in a grim voice, when the boy had finished. "Run off, before you get hurt."

"It don't hurt me," said Albert, simply. "It does me good. Dr. Maloney says that playing wind instruments is good for the lungs. He told me so yesterday."

He raised the mouth-organ again and played "Home, Sweet Home," with variations and much feeling.

"Why don't you go to the other end of the ship?" growled the chauffeur.

"'Cos I like this end," said Albert, finishing a passage. "Why don't you go?"

Mr. Biggs looked at Miss Mudge, but that lady made no sign. Then, turning his head, he saw the butler standing in the doorway of the smoke-room. His hands were folded in front of him and a seraphic smile played on his features as he stood gazing over the everlasting sea.

(To be continued.)

What I Read in Lord Kitchener's Hand.

By "CHEIRO."

"I know I shall die at sea."

"Cheiro's" interview with Lord Kitchener is remarkably interesting, altogether apart from the claims of Palmistry and Astrology of which every reader will have his own opinion, and of which, perhaps, the safest thing to say is that they are "strange if true."

ON July 21st, 1894, I had the honour of meeting Lord Kitchener and obtaining the autographed impression of his right hand which accompanies this article.

The day I had this important interview, the late Lord Kitchener, or, as he was then, Major-General Kitchener, was at the War Office. To take this impression I had to employ the paper lying on his table, and, strange as it may appear to those who read symbols, the imprint of the War Office may be seen at the top of the second finger—the finger known for ages as that of Fate—in itself perhaps a premonition that he would one day be the guiding hand in that great department in the most terrible war that up to now has threatened the destiny of Britain.

As I related in one of my recent books, "Palmistry for All," published by Herbert Jenkins, Ltd., in 1914, Lord Kitchener was at the moment of my interview Sirdar of the Egyptian Army, and had returned to England to tender his resignation on account of some hostile criticism over "the Abbas affair." His strong-willed action was a few weeks later completely vindicated. He was made a K.C.M.G., and returned to Egypt with more power than ever, and not long afterwards brought the Egyptian campaign to a successful close.

It seems only yesterday—that, to me, most memorable morning—when, after sending in my card, I was in a few minutes ushered into his room.

He received me most cordially. "Well," he said, "so you want to have a look at my hand again?"

"Again?" I said, in astonishment.

"Yes," he replied. "Years ago I went to see you, like so many hundreds of others, and I can only say you were most singularly accurate in everything you told me."

"I am so glad," I stammered, "for I hardly dared come and ask you to let me have an impression of your hand, as I had no idea you believed in such studies."

"Look here"—he turned and pointed to a small blue vase about three inches high that was standing on his table—"can you tell me anything about that?"

Utterly taken aback, I took the vase in my hands, looked it all over, and then put it down, saying, "I am sorry, but I don't know one vase from another. I never had the inclination to study such things."

"Just so," he laughed. "You have answered yourself. I have never studied hands and you have. If a man makes a lifelong study of a thing, I expect him to know more about it than anyone else—so now you know why I went to see you."

This little incident had put me completely at my ease, and in a few moments this great man, before whom so many trembled and who was so much misunderstood, was quietly leaning back in his chair asking me the meaning of the lines in his own clearly-marked palm and those of some famous men, such as Gladstone, the impressions of whose hands I had brought with me.

He was then forty-four years of age, and I remember well how I explained the still higher positions and responsibilities that his path of Destiny mapped out before him.

The heaviest and greatest of all would, I told him, be undertaken in his sixty-fourth year (1914), but how little either of us thought that in that year the most terrible war that England has ever engaged in would have broken out!

THE ONLY IMPRESSION OF LORD KITCHENER'S HAND EVER OBTAINED

NOTE THE IMPRINT FROM THE WAR OFFICE PAPER AT THE TOP OF THE SECOND FINGER.

Believing, as I do, in the Law of Periodicity playing as great a *rôle* in the lives of individuals as it does in nations, it is significant for those who make a study of such things to notice that the same radix numbers, or, as they are also called, the "Numbers of Fate," that governed Lord Kitchener's career when he was planning out the Egyptian campaign, which resulted in the victories of Atbara and Omdurman in 1896, 1897, and 1898, produce the same radix numbers for 1914, 1915, and 1916.

These years added together from left to right give the following numbers :—

1896 = 24 = 6 Opening of Egyptian campaign.
1897 = 25 = 7 Atbara and Omdurman.
1898 = 26 = 8 Rest from labour—honoured by nation.

1914 = 15 = 6 Opening of the Great War.
1915 = 16 = 7 Creation of Britain's Army of 4,000,000.
1916 = 17 = 8 Rest from labour—honoured by nation.

"Tell me what you like," he said, that morning of July, 1894, "as long as the end is some distance off," and yet, when I pointed out to him that the six, the eight, and the five were the most important numbers in his life, as quickly as the late King Edward worked out from my figures that sixty-nine was likely to be the end of his life, and joked with me and others about it afterwards, so Kitchener, with perhaps the same mysterious flash of intuition, called my attention to the fact that, when he would be sixty-six, the sixes indicated at the date of birth would for the first time come together, and also in a year (1916) whose Number of Destiny made the total of an eight. "Strange, isn't it," he laughed, "but is there any indication of the kind of death it is likely to be?"

"Yes," I said, "there are certainly indications, but not at all, perhaps, the kind of end that one would be likely to imagine would happen to you."

I then showed him, in as few words as possible, that, being born as he was in what is called "the Cusp of the first House of Air" in the Sign of Gemini, and entering into the first House of Water, the Sign of Cancer, also House of the Moon and detriment of Saturn—taking these indications together with the cabalistic interpretation of the numbers governing his life and the position Jupiter would be towards his sixty-sixth year, that his death would be by water, but most likely caused by storm at sea, with the attendant chance of some form of capture by an enemy and exile, from which he would never recover.

"Thanks," he laughed, "I prefer the first proposition.

"Yet," he added, "I must admit that what you tell me about danger at sea makes a serious impression on my mind, and I want you to note down among your queer theories—but do not say anything about it unless some day you hear of my being drowned—that I made myself a good swimmer—and I believe I am a fairly good one—for no other reason but that as far back as I can remember I have always had a queer feeling that water would be my greatest danger.

"Good-bye," he said. "I won't forget; and as, of course, you believe in thought-transference and that sort of thing, who knows if I won't send you some sign if it should happen that water claims me at the last?"

That he did remember is, I think, established by an Exchange Telegraph Company's message on June 19th, mentioning that "When Lord Kitchener came some three months ago to the British Front he met at Dunkirk Commandant de Balancourt, to whom he mentioned that a 'Jack Johnson' had dropped not far from him, 'that did not alarm me,' said the Field-Marshal, '*because I know I shall die at sea.*'"

I must now allude to a strange occurrence on the night of the disaster, and yet one that, had it not happened, I doubt very much if I would ever have felt the desire to write this article.

Many persons will of course regard what I am about to relate "as a strange coincidence," but to others it may be just another illustration of one of the many mysteries that make up the sum-total of what they call "the unexplored side of life."

The occurrence I am about to relate does not depend on myself for its testimony, for I have shown to the Editor of this Magazine the written testimony and confirmation of the two persons who were present.

Exactly at eight o'clock on Monday evening, June 5th, the hour when the disaster to the *Hampshire* happened, I was sitting in a large music-room in my house in the country with two friends, when during a pause in general conversation about the war we were startled by a crash of something falling in the north end of the room. Going to the place where the noise was heard, we saw a large oak shield on which the arms of Britain were painted lying on the floor, broken into two halves.

Picking it up, I noticed that the shield had broken through the part representative of England and Ireland, and, showing it to my friends, I could not help saying, "This is evidently an omen that some terrible blow has at this moment been dealt at England. I feel that some naval disaster has taken place in which Ireland is in some way concerned"; but how little did we think that at that very moment an illustrious Irishman, Lord Kitchener, was standing on the quarter-deck of the *Hampshire* facing his death in a tempest at sea!

A few minutes later the clock struck eight.

I have often asked myself since—did Lord Kitchener remember and keep his promise?

Returning to the accompanying illustration of Lord Kitchener's hand, low down in the palm one can hardly help noticing that the Line of Life, encircling the ball of the thumb, has a line shooting out through it crossing the two main lines of the hand—the Line of Fate

THE SHIELD WHICH BROKE AT THE HOUR OF LORD KITCHENER'S DEATH.
THIS INCIDENT IS VOUCHED FOR BY WITNESSES, AS RELATED IN THE ARTICLE.

going up to the first and second fingers and the Line of Success going up to the third. The line shooting across the Life Line is called the Line of Voyage or Travel, and it is a strange fact that it is on this hand seen *breaking* the Line of Fate and Line of Success at the very period where all my books on this subject show to be about the sixty-sixth year of age.

Taking these signs on the hand into consideration, the fact must be remembered, without going into more technical details, that as Lord Kitchener was born on June 24th, 1850, he was in the period of the year called the "Cusp of the first House of Water" and *detriment or exil of Saturn, whose number is an eight.* Now, looking back again at the influence of numbers, as I said before, his important ones were the sixes, the eights, and the fives, and the end of this great man's career, with the same mysterious fatality *that is seen more easily in the lives of the great*, took place in *his sixty-sixth year*, on *June 5th*, his weakest number, and at *eight o'clock* in the evening, while undertaking, *by water*, what might have been the most important journey of his life.

Considering all these things, perhaps, then, it is not too much to believe that in the case of Lord Kitchener "the appointed time" had come. The work of the life had been accomplished, and the year of 1916 was even at his birth written in the Book of Destiny as the year of the final "rest from labour."

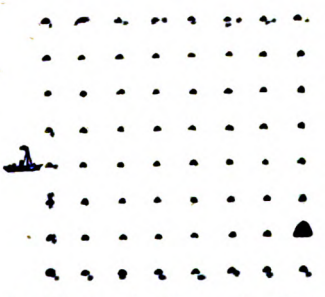
NOTE.—*As "Cheiro" retired from professional work some years ago, this article has been written by him with no other view but that of general public interest.*

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

312.—MINE-SWEEPING.

A MINE-SWEEPER, starting from the position shown in the illustration, picks up all the sixty-four mines in fourteen straight courses. The seventh course must end at the large mine, and the fourteenth must end at the point from which she set out. Take your pencil and try to strike out all the mines in fourteen continuous straight strokes under the conditions. A solution in fifteen courses is not difficult to find, but to perform the feat in fourteen requires skilful seamanship.



313.—CAN IT BE DONE?

I HAVE just been trying to place the thirty-two pieces on a chess-board so that not a single one of them can move or make a capture. The position must be one that could possibly (no matter how improbably) occur in a game. For example, two pawns of the same colour cannot be on the same file, since there has been no capture. I have failed, but I will show next month that it is at least possible to place the men so that there are only three moves. Perhaps some ingenious reader can beat this. It is a very interesting investigation.

314.—A TRIO OF WORD SQUARES.

1. .....
2. His sweetheart knows full well he does.
3. For these the baker ask.
4. Leaves of a certain Eastern plant.
5. The writer's frequent task.

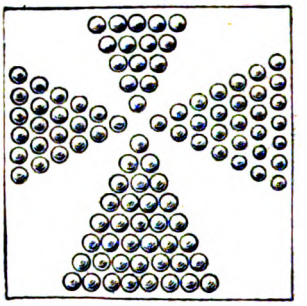
1. To happen sometimes, here and there.
2. .....
3. Found in the sea, I wis.
4. The custom of no matter whom.
5. Again disposed of, this.

1. Most useful are they to the smith.
2. A faith that's much embraced.
3. .....
4. Found in an artist's studio.
5. In ocean depths is traced.

The three blanks must be filled by the same word, of which we give no light.

315.—LAYING OUT SHELLS.

THE delivery was being made to our artillerymen, at various points, of one hundred spherical shells at a time. These could have been laid out on the ground in a square 10 by 10, but the eccentric officer in charge ordered them to be displayed in the manner shown in the illustration, which, he said, would remind his men of the Victoria Cross. Note that the four triangles have respectively five, six, seven, and eight shells on each of their sides. When the demand was made for a more plentiful supply of munitions the delivery was increased. They still received a square number of shells, and they were laid out in exactly the same way, the number along the three sides of the respective triangles being four successive numbers, say 8, 9, 10, 11, or 13, 14, 15, 16, or similarly. Now, what is the smallest possible number of shells in the delivery?



316.—AN ANAGRAM.

THE letters in the following name and address will, if properly arranged, give the name of a celebrated poet: W. D. Howells, Lawn Forge, Troy, N.H.

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

307.—THE HORSE-SHOE GAME.

JUST as in "Noughts and Crosses," every game should be a draw. Neither player can win except by the bad play of his opponent.

308.—FIND YOUR ENEMY.

OF course the addition of the year of anybody's birth to his age this year will always be 1916. The rest of the process is merely designed to conceal the simple addition of 18469 in order to bring the amount up to the required 20385, which, converted into letters of the alphabet in the way directed, reads BOCHE. There is the common enemy.

309.—THE FALSE SCALES.

IF the scales had been false on account of the pans being unequally weighted, then the true weight of the pudding would be 154oz., and it would have weighed 130oz. in one pan and 178oz. in the other. Half the sum of the apparent weights (the arithmetic mean) equals 154. But the illustration showed that the pans weighed evenly, and that the error was in the unequal lengths of the arms of the balance. Therefore the apparent weights were 121oz. and 169oz., and the real weight 143oz. Multiply the apparent weights together and we get the square of 143—the geometric mean. The lengths of the arms were in the ratio 11 to 13.

310.—MATE WITH THE PAWN.

WHITE plays as follows. The moves of Black are forced.
1. K to Q 6; 2. K to B 5; 3. K to B 6 (*a*); 4. Kt to B 8, ch.; 5. P to R 7, mate.

(*a*) The trick thus lies in getting the original position with Black to move.

311.—A RELATIONSHIP PUZZLE.

THE speaker was the son of his companion.

What Happened in Berlin.

By MRS. BELLOC LOWNDES.

Illustrated by A. Gilbert.

"LOVE?" exclaimed Rosie Vanderlyn, smiling a little reproachfully. And then again, more lightly, she uttered the word which to her meant so much. "Love? Why, love laughs not only at locksmiths, but at bread tickets, meat tickets, and, what is much more wonderful, even at fat tickets, dear Auntie Maas! Seriously, do you think that *any* privation would make me leave the country which is my lover's country, to say nothing of yours, and that of dear, kind Pappa Maas? Besides, as Pappa Maas is always telling us, we are not enduring more privations than we ought to endure in time of victorious war!"

A shadow came over the face of the older woman. She was small, frail-looking, indeed quite curiously un-German in appearance. "*Victorious* war?" she whispered, in a questioning tone.

The beautiful American girl who now stood smiling down at her caught Frau Maas up, rather quickly, "You say that, Auntie Maas"—but even she did not speak in a loud voice, even she looked round the large room before she spoke, for in the days of even victorious war Berlin walls have ears—"You say that because you are, after all, English born. Try as you will, you can't forget the British Navy, Frau Maas! But I, who am an American of Dutch descent, and engaged to a German officer, believe in the German Army, and so, naturally, in victory."

What did Frau Maas mean by her mysterious, reiterated hints that she, Rosie Vanderlyn, would do well to quit Berlin and go and live in Holland for a while? Rosie's happiness—nay, more, her duty—was surely to stay in the country of Major von Buberg, the Prussian officer to whom she was betrothed? Thanks to the good income which was paid to her so punctually each month by the German-American Bank, and to the generous terms made by her with the Herr Professor, the material conditions of Miss Vanderlyn's life seemed hardly affected by the terrible war which had now lasted sixteen months. But, of course, she did know that the handsome sum she paid her German host and his English wife made, as far as they were concerned, all the difference between plenty and starvation. That, surely, was yet another reason why she should stay in Berlin.

So, speaking this time far more defiantly than before, "No, no!" she exclaimed, "you will *never* persuade me that it can ever become either my pleasure or my duty to leave Berlin! I mean, of course, till I leave it"—she hid her beautiful, glowing face on her friend's breast—"till I leave it," she whispered at last, "for my honeymoon." She added, playfully, "I have already proved myself a better German woman than you will ever be, darling Auntie Maas!"

The person so addressed looked round apprehensively. "Hush, hush!" she murmured. "You know, Rosie, that in these dreadful times everything overheard may be reported to the police! My loyalty to Germany should surely be above suspicion; have I not four sons fighting—fighting against my own countrymen?" There was a thrill of bitter, hopeless pain in her low voice, but the girl now listening to her was too young, and too absorbed in her own affairs, to know what the other was feeling.

Poor Frau Maas! Her case was indeed cruel, for she, an Englishwoman, married when only eighteen to a German professor, after a sad, dull girlhood mostly spent in Hamburg, had never really *felt* English till this war had roused in her certain strong national instincts. And now her four sons were all at the Front, in Flanders, fighting against their mother's people.

Looking at the animated, lovely young woman who stood there, smiling through her tears, Frau Maas said to herself, "Fritz will have to tell her! I shall never be able to make her understand, unless I tell more of the truth than I am allowed to do!" Aloud, she went on, slowly, "I cannot say

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more than I have said, dear child, but much as I shall miss you, I beg you seriously to do what I so strongly advise. I may say that Major von Buberg also wishes you to leave Berlin," but as she said these last words her voice faltered.

At the mention of her lover, Rosie Vanderlyn's face altered; it stiffened into gravity. "And yet the last time I saw Max," she said, quietly, "he assured me that even if we met seldom, it was yet a great comfort to him to know that I was here, close by. If he has changed his mind, why does he not write and tell me so himself?"

"You promised to trust him absolutely," said Frau Maas, in a low voice.

"Yes, I did promise—and I do trust him, absolutely! I know his work is not only very important, but secret, too, and I have never asked him a single question about it. Since war broke out it has been enough for me to know that he is not fighting, and that this mysterious task keeps him from those awful trenches in Flanders. Do you remember that day early in the war when you came into my bedroom and found me on my knees, Frau Maas? I was thanking God that Max's work would keep him in Berlin, and that though he had only just told me that I was to see just as little of him as if he *were* at the Front!"

"But you *have* seen him sometimes," breathed Frau Maas. It was an assertion, not a question.

Rosie Vanderlyn blushed deeply. "Yes, I know I have seen Max—or, rather, that I did see him occasionally during the early months of war. But lately I have not seen him."

"Is that *quite* true, my dear?" Frau Maas looked fixedly at the girl, and Rosie hesitated; she grew red—painfully, unbecomingly red.

"No," she said at last. "It is not quite true, Frau Maas, for I will confess to you that I saw Max for five minutes last week. I gave him my word, however, that no one should know of our meeting."

"The police knew of it," observed Frau Maas, quietly. "And it is owing to that secret meeting between you and Major von Buberg that you are now being requested to leave Berlin."

"Oh, Auntie Maas!"

Every vestige of colour faded from Rosie Vanderlyn's cheeks. She looked, indeed, as if she were going to faint. Even in her free, independent, American ears the word "Police" had a terrifying sound. Also, it was horrible, and indescribably humiliating, to learn that unsympathetic, maybe mocking, eyes had seen that meeting—to her that sacred meeting, between herself and her lover.

Major von Buberg had chosen a spot which he believed to be entirely solitary, and an hour, six o'clock in the evening, when few people care to be out on a winter's night. Those five minutes—for in truth their interview had lasted scarcely more—Rosie had spent in his arms, listening to his ardent, broken protestations of love and of fidelity. "It may be long, long before we can meet again!" he had exclaimed. "But you must trust me, my beloved. And if ever you are in real peril, for in these days everything is possible, send me a note, unsigned addressed to my old nurse, Hedwig Bauer, 9, Luisastrasse. But, remember, Rosie, that in giving you that address I am risking not only my present, but my future career. Only in the extremity of danger are you to do this thing."

Had those solemn, secret words been overheard?

"I don't quite understand what you mean, Frau Maas." She spoke calmly, for she was too alarmed, too disturbed, to weep, but her hands were trembling, her lips twitching. "Do you mean that it is the police who wish me to leave Berlin? But what have I done to deserve such treatment? Every penny I could dispose of I have put in the War Loans, and I have given up all my time to war work."

Frau Maas got up and came over to where the poor girl had sunk down into the rocking-chair, which had been one of her own many gifts to the worthy couple with whom she had now lived so happily for two years.

"The authorities are well aware, Rosie, that you have rendered valuable service to your future country, and their feeling to you is most cordial and kindly. Yet even so, they have a reason for wishing you to leave Germany till this awful war is over. But, for God's sake, my dear, do not 'give me away.' I was warned only to advise you as from myself. But as I *have* said so much, I will say one thing more. To my thinking, the reason why you are desired to go away for a while is a very simple one. It is plain that Major von Buberg is engaged on a task of such danger, and of such delicacy, that his military superiors do not want his mind disturbed. He has always been under honour not to leave his post. By spending even that five minutes alone with you the other day he broke his word. That interview, short as it was, sealed your warrant of expulsion."

"Of expulsion?" Rosie Vanderlyn repeated; then, quietly, she added, "And supposing I *refuse* to go? Supposing you told the police that you have not been able to persuade me to leave Berlin? Do you seriously mean that they will *compel* me to go away—that they will deport me by force?"

Frau Maas looked at the girl with a very troubled expression on her thin, sensitive face.

"I cannot say what they would do," she answered. "But one thing I *must* tell you. Should they be driven to any such extremity, it might be a serious thing for your betrothed's future career. So I hope—I greatly hope, for Major von Buberg's sake, as well as for your own, Rosie—that you will consent to go quietly."

"You have told me so much," said the girl, pleadingly, "that I think you will consent to answering one more question. Have the people who have made up their minds to send me away any power over Max and his future? I mean, is it really the police, or is it the military authorities, who desire me to leave Berlin?"

"The Military Governor of Berlin himself saw my husband on the matter," answered Frau Maas, impressively.

A leaden weight suddenly descended on the girl's heart.

"Very well," she said, submissively, "I will go to Holland—I will leave at an hour's notice if necessary—if only I am allowed to see Max once more. If Max tells me to go, I will go."

Frau Maas looked deeply distressed.

"Rosie," she exclaimed, "I throw myself upon your mercy! I told you a lie when I said Major von Buberg also wished you to leave Berlin. He has no idea of what has happened. They think it would distress him greatly, and make him less fit for his task. Indeed, I was begged to induce you to write him a cheerful letter, saying you have gone of your own free will. For your lover's sake, for his own ultimate interest—you know how ambitious he is, how eager to get on in his profession——" She hesitated.

"Yes," said Rosie Vanderlyn, "I know that nothing but the Emperor's direct command has kept him from the Front."

"He is imprudent," exclaimed Frau Maas, "very imprudent to have told you even that much!"

"He told me that very early in the war," said Rosie, quietly, "at a time when we all thought the campaign would be over in a few weeks. He was heartbroken, poor fellow, at not having gone with the regiment." She remained silent for a few moments, then added the fateful words, "I will do as you advise, and arrange to leave Berlin in—shall I say ten days' time?"

"I fear they want you to leave before then," said Frau Maas, reluctantly. "Something was said about Wednesday——"

"But to-day is Monday!"

"Yes, I know that the time seems short." Poor Frau Maas looked wretched—and she had cause to be, for the loss of this generous paying guest was a very, very serious thing to her and the Herr Professor. There was still food for those who had money to pay for it, but only yesterday the Frau Professorin had been asked to pay nine marks for a pound and a half of poor quality veal.

"And what is it they want me to write to Max? What excuse am I to give?" asked the girl, dully. She was numb with surprise and pain.

"They wish Major von Buberg to believe you are leaving of your own free will because you now find your position as an American in Berlin a disagreeable one. Will you mind saying that, my child?"

"Yes, I shall mind it very, *very* much." She burst into sobs. "Everyone—well, if not everyone, all your friends, are still fairly kind to me. Also, as you know, I speak German so well that no stranger ever takes me for an American."

The other shook her head sadly. "Only yesterday Pappa Maas received two very disagreeable anonymous letters, asking him why he kept an American woman in his house—he, with an English wife, too!"

Rosie looked away. She was cut to the heart. Why had Frau Maas told her this cruel, cruel thing?

But Frau Maas, poor soul, was wise in her generation. She knew that Rosie would be hurt, but she had wished to hurt Rosie, for Rosie's own good—for the girl's good and for that of her lover, Major von Buberg.

Perhaps Rosie Vanderlyn guessed something of what was in the other's mind. For suddenly she got up and put her strong young arms round the sickly, sad-looking woman's neck. "God bless you for all your kindness to me!" she murmured. "Whatever happens, I have been happy—divinely happy with you and dear, dear Pappa Maas. And lately, oh! I have felt as if I were almost wicked to be so content, with everyone round me anxious and sad—to be so at rest about the man I love, while all of you are in

"'GOD BLESS YOU FOR ALL YOUR KINDNESS TO ME,' SHE MURMURED."

miserable suspense! But I am not happy now—I don't suppose there is in all Berlin so miserable a girl as I am, *now*——"

The door opened, and the burly figure of the Herr Professor Friedrich Maas pushed through it. He was too worried, too preoccupied, himself to notice how troubled and excited was his good "old woman" and the beautiful American girl to whom he had become so truly attached.

"I news bring," he exclaimed, in his quaint English. "But no good news bring I! It is declared by friend Gustav Keller that those obstinate Belgians refuse the so generous and desirable peace terms by our Kaiser through the Queen of the Belgians' mother offered."

"That is indeed bad news," and Frau Maas shook her head dolefully.

"Also, still more serious news whisper will I." The old man drew nearer. "A very high medical authority declares the Kaiser's condition very serious is."

"But the Kaiser is to drive through the city on his way to lunch with the Imperial Chancellor on the day after to-morrow," objected Frau Maas, quickly. "So he cannot be seriously ill, my dear."

"He has not out for three weeks been,

and all kinds of wild rumours about are. In Paris and in London he dying is believed to be. I myself fear very sick he is."

II.

ROSIE VANDERLYN stirred in her sleep—she sighed deeply, and as she sighed, awoke.

Awoke in the darkness of this winter morning's dawn in what was so truly, though she did not realize it, a beleaguered city, to the knowledge that this was the dawn of the day on which she was to leave Berlin. Even now she could see, standing on the floor near the stove, the dim shape of her trunk, duly packed and strapped.

Actuated by some queer, superstitious feeling, she had not taken down any of the pretty ornaments, the many charming, costly trifles which had gradually transformed the ugly little room into something approximately like an American girl's bedchamber.

In the fine apartment houses or flats which are the glory of modern Berlin everything is sacrificed to effect. Thus the living rooms are large and airy, often even magnificent in proportions; but the bedrooms are small, tucked away at the back, and as often as not their windows overlook a blank wall. But to Rosie this little room had become very dear, for she had been so happy there—always happy—even before she had met the man who had so soon become her lover.

After a year of wandering about Europe with a widowed friend who was a selfish, ill-tempered woman, a happy chance had brought Rosie Vanderlyn to Berlin, and in contact with this simple couple, a survival of the old, dreamy, romantic Germany of long, long ago. She had come to them meaning to stay two months. And then she had become so attached to the Herr Professor and his quiet, rather sad, old English wife that she had stayed on—on, till love had come with a great rush and splendid exultation into her life.

Miss Vanderlyn had met Major von Buberg at the American Embassy, and though he was many years older than herself, and in no sense what is in Berlin called "a marrying officer," it had been a case of love at first sight on both their parts.

Handsome, clever, accomplished, still apparently full of the ardour of youth, Major von Buberg approximated more than does the average Prussian officer of rank to his Sovereign. It was an approximation which, in his case, was intensified by a slight physical resemblance to the Kaiser—a resemblance which would have been much stronger had he not chosen to be clean shaven.

For some time Max von Buberg had not known that the lovely American girl had a considerable fortune of her own. So little indeed had he known it, that early in his acquaintance with her he had spoken as if he would give up everything for love, and, in Rosie's own country, start a new life, as many a German officer had had to do on marrying a dowerless girl. So it had been delightful to her to be loved, as she knew she had been, for her own sake.

She and Max von Buberg had become formally betrothed in the April of 1914, and, loverlike, he had pressed for an immediate marriage.

But no leave was granted during that busy spring to Prussian officers of the Guard, and the American girl, set on what she called a proper honeymoon, was in no hurry to be married. A month partly spent in Paris and in Italy would be possible in the autumn following their betrothal, so why hurry?

Lying there, on this wintry morning of the day on which she was to leave Berlin, with her heart desolate, and oppressed with a terrible oppression, Rosie remembered a sunny afternoon, early in the July of 1914, when Major von Buberg had come and suddenly implored her once more to consent to an immediate wedding. "It is very desirable that we be married at once," he had exclaimed, "but I am on honour not to tell you the reason."

He had spoken with a strange, harsh decision, and she had felt angered, taken aback by his abruptness. She refused, not unkindly, but very firmly, what she took to be an unreasonable demand. And at last he had said, "What if I may have to go away—what if we be parted for a long time?"

"Parted?" she had repeated, incredulously. "For how long, Max?"

In a very low voice he had answered, "I cannot tell you for how long. Perchance for a month, perchance for two months—not, I think, for as long as three months."

Whereupon she had exclaimed, gaily—her heart ached now to remember the words—"But in no case was *I* going to stay in Berlin in August, so after all there is nothing changed, and I don't think we can improve on the twenty-third of September."

And then, less than three weeks later, she, Rosie Vanderlyn, had understood! When Max von Buberg had come and asked her to hasten their marriage, he had known there was to be War, a war which he believed—as

did then all war-mad Germany—would be over in a few glorious weeks, but weeks which must be, however glorious, fraught with peril to every soldier taking part in the campaign.

Then, within three days of the General Mobilization, and of that Proclamation of Martial Law which she, Rosie Vanderlyn, will never forget, were she to live to be a hundred years old, Max von Buberg came and told his betrothed, with a bitter chagrin he could not conceal, some amazing news. This news was that he was not going to the Front after all! That instead he had been charged by the Emperor himself with a secret, important task which would keep him in Berlin. He had further explained that they two would be able to meet but seldom. But, as a matter of fact, they had met frequently during the first few weeks of war.

Early in that September, when the victorious German hosts seemed to be rushing on Paris, Rosie had asked her lover whether he would care for an immediate marriage. But he had shaken his head, and answered rather grimly, "We must now wait till the end of the war." A moment later he had caught her to his heart, with the words, "But that, my darling, will not be long! Before the leaves fall, so the All Highest War Lord says, our victorious legions will be back in Berlin, and my task—my difficult, dull, disagreeable task—will be, please God, at an end."

Now, this morning, that seemed years, instead of only fourteen months, ago!

As time had gone on she and Max von Buberg had met less and less often, and when, by good fortune, she did see him for a few moments, he looked tired, haggard, moody—older than the forty-two years to which he had so gaily owned in the early days of their betrothal.

Suddenly the words von Buberg had uttered during this last short, secret, hurried meeting began to clang insistently in Rosie's ears: "*If ever you are in real peril, send me a note, just a few words, unsigned, addressed to my old nurse, Hedwig Bauer, 9, Luisastrasse. But, remember, Rosie, that in giving you that address I am risking not only my future but my present position. Only in the extremity of danger are you to do this thing.*"

Rosie Vanderlyn lay back among her pillows. Her heart began to beat wildly. She felt an overpowering wish to communicate with her lover. But could she honestly describe herself as in an extremity of danger? Her conscience said, "*No*," but her heart cried, "*Yes*." Surely she could so describe her expulsion, she knew not for what reason, from the country which she had already made her own?

Sitting up in bed, and covering her face with her hands, she began to think deeply. Suddenly a ray of light seemed to flood her anxious heart. Instead of writing a note she could go and see the good old woman who had been her lover's nurse. If she went there early this morning, there would still be some hours during which, if he chose to do so, Major von Buberg could communicate with her, and perhaps even get that cruel order of expulsion—for, disguise it how one might, it was nothing less—rescinded.

III.

THERE were few people out in Berlin on this wintry morning, and those who were about looked so anxious and forbidding—in many cases so hungry—that the American girl, hurrying along clad in her oldest coat and skirt, and wearing her plainest hat, felt afraid to accost them. At last she met a small boy staggering along under a parcel which would have been heavy for a man. Slipping a piece of nickel into his free hand, she asked him if he knew the Luisastrasse.

"Why, I live close there!" he exclaimed.

Together they walked on till they reached a quiet, old-fashioned street running behind the royal castle which now seems the only survival and reminder of old Berlin.

"What's the number you want?" asked the boy.

"Number thirty."

"There it is! But I don't think anyone's living there. I've never seen anyone going in or out of the door." And he ran off, pleased with the trifle the pretty, tall, fair young lady had given him.

No. 30, Luisastrasse, was a big house, and not at all the sort of place where Rosie would have expected Major von Buberg's nurse to reside.

She rang the old-fashioned bell, and then she waited for what seemed to be an eternity, in the cold, solitary street.

At last the shutter of the square "stare-hole," as the German housekeeper calls it, slipped back in the massive door, and Rosie Vanderlyn, through its bars, saw the anxious-looking eyes of the old woman whom she had seen several times early in her engagement.

With a feeling that now, at last, all would be well, the girl standing outside the door smiled radiantly. And, as if in answer to that smile, Hedwig drew the heavy door open a few inches, and beckoned to her unexpected

"SHE AWOKE TO THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THIS WAS THE DAWN OF THE DAY ON WHICH SHE WAS TO LEAVE BERLIN."

visitor to slip through. Then, before Rosie had time even to say good morning, Major von Buberg's old nurse bolted and barred the door.

With wondering eyes the girl looked round the large, dark hall, furnished more in English and American fashion than in the German way. At the back of the hall was an iron corkscrew staircase. Almost as if in answer to her thought, Hedwig observed, "This is a curious house, gracious lady! It was built by an Englishman—mad, as they are all mad."

As she spoke Rosie noticed that dust lay thick on the heavy table, as also on the substantial oak chairs flanking the table. In fact, this strange entrance hall looked as if it belonged to a house which was not lived in.

And then for a few moments—it seemed a very long time to Miss Vanderlyn—the two women, the tall, slender American girl and the short, stout old German woman, stood looking at one another without speaking; and, as she stood there in that cold, dark hall, Rosie felt an eerie feeling of dread creep over her. She had thought to find Major von Buberg's nurse living in one of those busy, lively, cheerful hives in which the poor of Berlin congregate. It seemed a sinister thing to find her in this great, gloomy, empty house.

And then, all at once, the truth, or rather a little glint of the truth, penetrated into Rosie's mind.

"Does Major von Buberg live here?" she whispered.

And the old woman, looking round apprehensively, as if afraid she might be overheard, muttered back, "Yes, yes—he lives here, of course. But no one must know it. No one *does* know it, but you and I, gracious lady."

Once more there was a long silence between them.

"Is he here now?" murmured Rosie, and the other nodded.

And then over Rosie Vanderlyn there swept an irresistible temptation. "Oh, Hedwig, do you think that I could see him—just for one moment?" she asked, impulsively. "I am going away to-day, to Holland, till the end of the war. So this will be our last chance of meeting. I had meant only to give you a message, but is there any reason why I should not see him for a few moments? Surely he would not mind being told that I am here?"

The woman looked at Miss Vanderlyn with a dubious, puzzled expression; she already regarded Major von Buberg's betrothed as her future mistress, for had not her dear nurseling promised that a corner should always be found in his future home for his faithful old nurse? It never occurred to Hedwig that Rosie could be ignorant of the secret service on which the Major was engaged. And yet—and yet Hedwig's orders were very strict, and never once had she broken them. These orders were that never was she to admit *anyone* to her master's presence in that house.

As a matter of fact, Major von Buberg was very little there, for from half-past ten in the morning till seven each night he was away, close by, as Hedwig well knew, but as inaccessible as if they had been separated by leagues of sea. After coming back from his work he ate the simple dinner old Hedwig prepared for him, and then spent the rest of the evening with his books and a pipe. It was a melancholy, monotonous life for any intelligent man; how much more so for a brilliant soldier, in time of war. But Major von Buberg, as his nurse knew, was engaged in a task which was not less important and far more delicate than any he could have found on active service.

The fact that this sweet young lady was here proved that she also was in the secret—that dangerous secret known to so few that, as the Major had himself told Hedwig, in all Berlin they could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

It was now ten o'clock; therefore he was still here, either in his bedroom, or more probably in the spacious study—it had been a studio in the days of the English owner of the house—where he spent most of his time.

Hedwig Bauer was a simple soul, but she had lived long enough in the world to know something of love—man's master passion. Surely Major von Buberg would not wish his beloved *Braut* to be sent away without seeing him, now that she was actually here, in the house?

"The gracious lady knows where the Herr Major spends his days?" she whispered. And Rosie nodded. "Yes," she said, reluctantly, "I *do* know that. Is the Herr Major already gone to the Castle?"

The old woman shook her head. "No," she breathed, "he has not gone yet—he never does go there till half-past ten. And to-day he may be a little later, for to-day is to be a busy day—the gracious lady understands what I mean?"

But Rosie did not understand at all—and she did not much care. From what her lover had told her his secret daily task at the Royal Castle was at once monotonous and disagreeable, dull and sometimes dangerous.

She glanced at her jewelled wrist-watch. "It is very nearly half-past ten now," she exclaimed, "so why shouldn't I wait for him here? Then I shall catch him as he goes through the hall."

Hedwig looked at her, surprised. "But the Herr Major never comes down here," she exclaimed. "The Herr Major never has to go out of doors at all. Surely the gracious lady is aware that there is a secret passage from this house to the Castle?"

"A secret passage?" repeated Rosie Vanderlyn, incredulously.

The old woman nodded, and a look of apprehension came across her fat, wrinkled face. "I thought that the gracious lady knew that that was so," she said, confusedly. "I trust the gracious lady will not allow the Herr Major to know that I have betrayed one of his secrets."

"Of course not—I won't say anything about it!" answered Rosie. "But Hedwig—dear Hedwig!"—she looked very pleadingly at her lover's old nurse—"surely you can go and tell him that I am here—and that I long, *long* to see him, even if only for a minute? He said that I was to communicate with him through you if I were in any great trouble; and I *am* in *great* trouble."

The girl covered her face with her hands, and through her fingers the tears trickled. She felt terribly forlorn. For the first time since her betrothal she realized that she was in

a foreign country, among foreign people, and that her frank, independent ways were not their ways.

A passionate jealousy of this secret service on which her lover was engaged also filled her heart. Why was it that this old woman knew so much of which she was kept in ignorance? But for her own foolish obstinacy she would by now have been Max von Buberg's wife, and he would have *had* to trust her.

"Hedwig!" she exclaimed, rather imperiously. "I only ask you to tell me how to find the way to the Herr Major's sitting-room. I will tell him that I went straight there, without asking your leave." She waited a moment, then asked, coaxingly, "I suppose one has to go up that winding staircase?"

"Yes," answered Hedwig, tremblingly; "you go up the winding staircase, gracious lady, then walk straight down the passage to the door at the end. You cannot make a mistake, for there is but one door, and it leads into the room which the English rascal who built this house made into a studio, but which the Herr Major now uses as his study."

Rosie Vanderlyn did not wait to hear the last words, for she was already half-way across the hall.

Swiftly, silently, she ran up the steps of the corkscrew staircase. Yes, there was the passage, lit by clouded-glass windows, straight before her. She walked quickly down it, then stopped short before the closed door which she knew gave access to her lover's sitting-room.

The closed door looked curiously forbidding. Yet surely Max, even if displeased at her action in coming here, would be, must be, glad to see her? Still, it was with a feeling of painful misgiving that she turned the handle, and slowly, very slowly, pushed the door open.

Before her was a long, bare-looking room, which had obviously been built for a studio, and at the farther end of the room, opposite to where she had by now timidly advanced to a place under the skylight, were two doors. The room was empty, and though there was a writing-table, and a few chairs set about in the formal German fashion, the apartment had a most unlived-in look, and though the big stove was alight it was very cold.

The girl's heart suddenly failed her. In a flash she realized that what she was now doing might appear, in the eyes of her lover, an enormity. Had Max von Buberg been an American, or even an Englishman, she would have walked forward and knocked boldly in turn at each of the two closed doors before her, but Germans are very conventional with regard to the behaviour of their own women-kind, whatever they may be with regard to that of their acquaintances, and they are extremely prudish as to the conduct of their wives, of their sisters, and, above all, of their *fiancées*.

She told herself that perhaps, after all, the wisest thing she could now do would be to retrace her steps, and simply leave a message with Major von Buberg's old nurse—in no circumstances could he think that either bold or unmaidenly!

Slowly, with bitter tears welling up in her eyes, she turned round, and then, all at once, she heard one of the doors behind her, at the other end of the long room, swing a few inches open, and her lover's voice rang out. The tone was eager, good-humoured, even jovial. "Hedwig, is that you? Fetch me a glass of hot water at once!" Then followed the astonishing words, which Rosie heard distinctly, though it were more as though Major von Buberg had muttered them to himself, "*I cannot get this damned moustache to stick on properly!*"

The sound of his dear voice, uttering those few words in a tone of such cheerful, careless impatience, seemed to blow away the girl's vague, unreasoning fear of his displeasure. She turned round smiling.

Again there came the sound of her lover's voice, yet she could not see him, for he was still behind the half-open door. "Hedwig! Wait a moment, my good soul—I think I've got it to stick on all right now! I'm in a great hurry, for there's an audience at a quarter-past eleven, and I have first to receive some particular instructions——" And, as these last words reached her, the door at which she was gazing so eagerly swung open, widely.

And then Rosie Vanderlyn uttered a sharp, low cry of surprise and terror, for the man she now saw hastening down the long room towards her, clad in a splendid and to her a quite unfamiliar uniform, was not her lover, but the mighty Emperor, the Kaiser, the War Lord himself!

With wild eyes she looked beyond the strange and terific apparrition, for she could hear quick exclamations of joy, of concern, of welcoming, of reproof, being uttered in Max von Buberg's voice. But, no—there was no sign of her betrothed's familiar, reassuring presence, only that brilliant, unreal-looking figure, clad in a field-marshal's uniform, striding nearer and nearer.

"VON BUBERG! WHAT HAVE WE HERE?

And then, all at once, the truth burst on the American girl with stunning force, and she saw that the man before her was indeed Max von Buberg—Max made up as his Sovereign's double, ready, that is, to take the place and, if need be, play the part of the Emperor himself!

A moment later any doubt which might have lingered in her brain was set at rest, for she knew that the arms which were now closing round her, and pressing her eagerly, hungrily, to that bemedalled, beribboned breast were without doubt her lover's arms, the lips which were being pressed to hers, her lover's lips.

Suddenly, with a quick, impatient movement, he raised his hand to his mouth, tugged at the false moustache, and half of it came off. And then Rosie Vanderlyn began to laugh, to laugh and cry together. In vain she tried to stop herself, the tears and the laughter would come, gushing, tumbling forth, while she heard his anxious, distracted voice exclaiming in her ear, "What is the matter, darling? What made you come here, at the risk of your life and mine? I have not a moment, for even now I should be at the Castle receiving my instructions"—his voice dropped—"from the All Highest. Rosie, for Heaven's sake stop laughing!"

Rosie made a mighty effort. She tried to calm herself, and then in a few breathless words she told him why she had come, and that this must be their last meeting till the end of the war. He, on his side, whispered in her ear the dread secret she already guessed—how he had been chosen on the outbreak of war to personate his Emperor whenever it was deemed either necessary or advisable. "At first it was very seldom, but lately"—his voice sank—"lately it has almost always been I—and sometimes, Rosie, I have felt as if I should go mad—quite mad!"

He was too absorbed in what he was saying, too agitated with mingled feelings of love and fear, to see the look of abject terror which suddenly flashed over the girl's face as she

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? WHO IS THIS?"

gazed once more with wild, affrighted eyes over her lover's shoulder.

Down the long room, walking feebly, leaning on a stick, there was now advancing slowly the figure of a man dressed in the simplest of undress uniforms; and Rosie knew, with a dreadful sureness of knowledge, that here, at last, was quite certainly the Emperor himself. On his expressive countenance there was a look of great astonishment and of stern displeasure.

But, oh! how strangely and woefully unlike he now was to the vision Rosie Vanderlyn had retained of the brilliant, debonair Kaiser to whom she had had the delightful honour of being presented just after her betrothal.

The face of the man who was now approaching nearer and nearer to where she stood still clasped in her lover's arms was blanched, his hair streaked with grey and white strands, and his eyes—those eyes which Rosie remembered so bright and so challenging, and blue with a wonderful gentian blueness—now looked dim and bloodshot. The Kaiser looked not only old and shrunken, but ill almost unto death.

She did not—she could not—speak, and that though she knew that Max von Buberg was still unaware of that Presence which was now so close to them both. But his happy ignorance only lasted a moment longer, for a husky voice exclaimed, "Von Buberg! What have we here? What does this mean? Who is this—this—"—the voice hesitated, then brought out the words, not unkindly—"this young lady?"

But Rosie Vanderlyn did not hear Max von Buberg's answer, for she had fainted.

Rosie awoke to find herself in bed in a darkened room. Was she still dreaming? Had she indeed dreamed everything she now remembered—her visit to that strange house in the Luisastrasse, and the amazing, incredible adventure which had there befallen her?

But as the moments passed by she realized that she was wide awake, and that *it was all*

true. Raising herself on her elbow, she looked timorously round.

Yes, she was lying in a typical German bed and in a typical old-fashioned-looking German bedroom. It was dimly lit by one tallow candle, and opposite to where she lay was a closed door.

A feeling of numb terror swept over her. What was to be her punishment for having discovered her lover's dread secret—that secret which had not been his to tell, and which she had discovered through her own folly and disobedience?

She lay back, and closed her eyes. And then there rose on the stillness the sound of women's voices, and with a rush of almost agonized relief she recognized that one of them was the voice of old Hedwig.

The door opened slowly and a tall, white-haired lady, dressed in mourning, walked into the room; just behind her came old Hedwig, tears coursing down her wrinkled, fat face.

Rosie instinctively closed her eyes as Hedwig and the lady walked up to her bedside. They began talking in whispers, and the meaning of what they were saying gradually stole into the girl's weary and excited brain, filling every cranny of it with relief and soundless depths of joy, for very soon it became clear to her that she, Rosie Vanderlyn, instead of being punished for what she had done, was to be married to Max von Buberg within an hour from now in the chapel of the old Castle.

And then the soft, full voice with which she was unfamiliar said, doubtfully, "But do you really think she will be fit to go through the ceremony this very night? She looks so flushed and feverish, poor girl."

And the nurse gave a confident answer. "Yes, your Majesty, yes; without a doubt she will be fit. She is now sleeping quite naturally."

Rosie heard the old woman move away, and a moment later Hedwig came back holding the candle. She held it over the bed, and Rosie, opening her eyes, smiled.

Could it be really true that the Empress, whom she had always longed she might some day see face to face, was standing there, looking down at her, full of concern and, yes, with a good deal of feminine curiosity too?

"Have you heard what we have been saying, my child?"

And Rosie blushed deeply. "Yes, I have heard everything," she said, falteringly.

"And do you feel that you will be well enough to go through the ceremony?"

And Rosie said "Yes," with all her heart.

Then for the first time the Empress spoke in English. "Love?" she said, gently. "Love laughs at locksmiths, and overrides even martial law!"

ACROSTICS.

The last of the Quarter.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 11.

One in the North, one in the South, they stand.
Two English counties, one on either hand.

1. Bold, resolute, and—it will be agreed—
Romantic character in very deed.

2. Fortune at present seems to point the way
To name from which two letters have to stray.

3. *He* may possess a bike, perhaps a moke;
She was his fancy; *it* can puzzle folk.

4. Heroic slave, enamoured of a queen.
(Her uncles can be very neatly seen.)

5. A bird, but not a lady bird, is he;
A man he was, in ancient history

6. Although a word or two would seem to show
That William was observed, it is not so.

PAX.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 12.

Two English poets grace our page,
As once they graced an earlier age.

1. Remove one letter from a bird.
2. "Warrior, valiant"—headless word.
3. A certain sound this indicates
4. To certain letters this relates.
5. One letter is sufficient now.
6. Here one wiped "sweat-drops from his brow."

PAX.

ANSWER TO No. 9.

1. P uf F
2. I ne A
3. L oo T
4. G us H
5. R everi E
6. I nquisito R
7. M es S

ANSWER TO No 10.

1. H ouseto P
2. O rator O
3. R ene W
4. S ausag E
5. E dito R

NOTE.—Light I. Proverbs xxi. 9.

Answers to Acrostics 11 *and* 12 *should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor,* THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Stryt, Strand, London, W.C., and must arrive not later than by the first post on August 9th.*

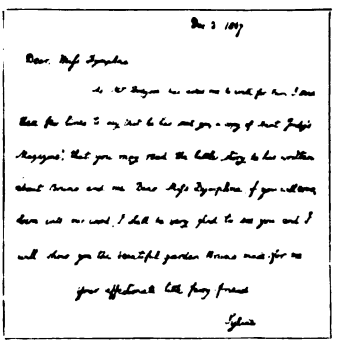
Two answers may be sent to every light.

With their answers to these two acrostics, solvers are requested to send also their names and addresses.

An Unpublished Letter of Lewis Carroll.

By DYMPHNA ELLIS.

THIS curious little letter, believed to be unique among the literary remains of Lewis Carroll, has come to light, after lying for a generation or two in an old desk. It was written by him for a child friend, and is one more instance of his imaginative sympathy with the child's mind, and of the trouble he would take to give pleasure to one of them. It was sent with a presentation copy of a number of the charming serial, "Aunt Judy's Magazine," the number containing the little story of "Sylvie and Bruno," afterwards worked into the longer book of that name. It purports to have been written by the fairy "Sylvie," and I do not think any of us then doubted the reputed authorship, the charm of our friendship with the author being, that he created round himself and us an "atmosphere" which made the things of the imagination even more real than the rice puddings and holland pinafores of the period.



THIS REPRODUCTION OF LEWIS CARROLL'S CURIOUS LITTLE LETTER IS EXACTLY THE SAME SIZE AS THE ORIGINAL. IT APPEARS IN PRINT BELOW.

The writing is so minute, that it is barely readable by the naked eye, and might have been written with a needle point—one cannot imagine a pen small enough—and the ink is a little faded. It shows, however, all the character of the handwriting which some of us knew so well.

Looking back through the years I find that, though Mr. Dodgson was the arch-playmate, I can give no definite reason *why* he was so. Part of the charm, I think, was a certain mystery which surrounded himself and his doings. His traffic with the fairies seemed a very definite thing to us then. He was, so to speak, the link between them and us, the "middleman" in fact, and the Interpreter. He would produce from his treasures mysterious toys, such as can now be bought for a penny in the street, but in his day were rare things of fearful joy—such as little heaps of brown wrinkled rubber, which, being inflated, swelled out into very aweful serpents, who flew across the room, subsiding in a corner with a muffled screech. All these doings enlivened the hated task of being photographed, for making pictures of the children was ever the object of his visits, and was a severe trial, even though we knew it pleased him. When playing with these toys and puzzles he was wont to say, "But then I am called Dodgeson" (sounding the silent "g" in the name) "because I am so full of *dodges!*" It is curious how all he said and did still lives in the memory after all these years.

We, the survivors of his child-friends, do not forget him, and though, so far, we look in vain for a statue of "Alice" beside "Peter Pan" in Kensington Gardens, we love to think that his name will be remembered by English children at least as long as that of Shakespeare.

Dec. 2, 1867.

Dear Miss Dymphna,

As Mr. Dodgson has asked me to write for him, I send these few lines to say that he has sent you a copy of "Aunt Judy's Magazine," that you may read the little story he has written about Bruno and me. Dear Miss Dymphna, if you will come down into our wood, I shall be very glad to see you, and I will show you the beautiful garden Bruno made for me.

Your affectionate little fairy-friend, Sylvie.

SLEEPING OUT.

By

EDWIN L. SABIN.

HE got the notion from a newspaper article. "By Jove!" he said. "Why can't we try that ourselves! I believe it would do us both good. Maybe we aren't getting air enough at nights."

With the doors and windows wide open, I had thought that we were getting all the air we could breathe, and so I ventured to suggest, but Man-of-the-House was obsessed.

"It's impossible to get the full amount of fresh air, no matter how many doors and windows there are," he informed me. "The dead air collects in pockets. Anyway, I'm going to think this over."

That night we had air enough, so that he got up and shut down a window; but the next evening he came home inspired.

"Saw Thompson to-day," he buoyantly asserted. "Thompson says he and his wife have been sleeping out for six months. They couldn't be made to sleep indoors again. It's great, positively great! He says you get up in the morning feeling like a prize-fighter. His wife wasn't a good sleeper before. Now she sleeps right through the night. She's crazy about it. He says you ought to talk with *her* about it. It's cured them both of catching cold. He says you'd never believe there could be such a difference between outdoor sleeping and indoor sleeping until you've tried it. Doors and windows simply create a draught. They sleep out, rain or snow, doesn't matter what the weather. He says if you've any doubts you ask his wife."

"Where do they sleep, dear?" I meekly inquired.

"Have a regular sleeping veranda upstairs, off their bedroom. Screened on three sides, that's all."

"Where should we sleep, then?"

"Why, we've a veranda, haven't we?"

"But it's downstairs," I reminded him.

"What's the difference? Nobody can see us. If we move a few things to one side we can get two beds in there easily. We can have one end of it screened in. Then the milkman wouldn't bother us. It would be a nice place for you to sit during the day, too," he cunningly added.

"But it's so exposed, dear," I pleaded.

"We can undress in the house," he said, "and then skip out to bed in our dressing-gowns. Nobody'll see us. And in the morning we'll be up early, to skip inside again and dress. Thompson says they always get up early. The light wakes them. And five hours' sleep outdoors counts for more than ten in any bedroom."

I yielded to Man-of-the-House. His enthusiasm was rather contagious. He spent the rest of the evening on the veranda measuring and planning. Every difficulty vanished like the fog before the sun. Nothing was easier than to screen in that end of our front veranda. The carpenter could do the work in a day, and so he did; before Man-of-the-House arrived home from his day's drudgery, athirst for fresh air, the two beds had been set up with their mattresses and covered with their serviceable army blankets.

"Oughtn't we to have curtains?" I hazarded. "Don't the Thompsons have curtains?"

"Yes," said Man-of-the-House; "but they don't use 'em. Too stuffy. Fresh air is what you're after. Thompson says that you sleep so hard you don't mind wind or rain or snow

or anything. That's the beauty of sleeping out—you get hardy."

On that memorable first night Man-of-the-House preceded me, and hopped right blithely in between his covers. I followed.

"Great, isn't it?" proffered from his bed Man-of-the-House. "Breathe this air? See those stars? Almost as good as camping out."

"Are you warm enough, dear?" I queried, cautiously.

"Fine," he murmured. "Thompson says you don't need as many bedclothes outdoors as in. Your system's invigorated—more resistance power—fresh air—" and his voice trailed off in vagueness.

After the people at a party next door had dispersed, and none of them had looked in on us *en route*, I finally went to sleep.

I couldn't have been asleep very long when desperate creakings from the Man-of-the-House bed awakened me.

"What are you doing, dear?" I demanded.

"The blamed bedclothes are all out at the foot," he growled, panting with his unseen labours. "Why don't you sleep?"

"It's raining, Ralph!" I proclaimed. "We ought to go in."

"No!" he grunted. "What do we care? Rain won't hurt us. Thompson says they enjoy it."

"But it'll make our beds all wet."

"No, it won't. Supposing it does. These blankets are waterproof. Be game."

With the thought of the hardy Mrs. Thompson to embolden me I resolved to wait for another forty winks. The echo of a loud noise brought me up, half-sitting, heart beating, eyes staring. And the rain was now raining into my face. I really wasn't sure of the noise; but I was sure of the rain, and the noise might have been thunder. The rain was drifting right across my bed, and my hair was wet, and the breeze made an eerie sound. So did Man-of-the-House, who was slumbering slothfully and irritatingly. Whether he was getting wet or not, he must be aroused to the situation.

"What's the matter?" he sleepily responded.

"It's raining right in on us," I informed him. "I'm going in."

"Let it rain," he asserted. "Can't hurt us. Thompson says he likes it. Good for the complexion."

"They have curtains, though," I protested. "My hair's all wet." (Wet hair is an abominable thing to sleep in—so clammy and untidy.) "I'm going in." And I prepared to pick up my bed and walk, if I only could find those bed slippers.

"Hold on!" he cried. "'Tisn't raining much. It's just a little shower. You aren't going back into that stuffy bedroom, are you?"

"I am," I assured him; "I'm going where I can be dry at least."

Would I never get a toe into one of those slippers? How disgusting! And meanwhile the rain was industriously sprinkling me. Man-of-the-House implored more briskly.

"Wait till I get a light," he essayed.

"You'll do no such thing," I forbade, in alarm. I could hear our neighbours up and closing windows.

Ah! One slipper.

"Well, it isn't raining in the middle of the veranda," he said. "Really it isn't." His bed creaked and other poignant noises succeeded.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

"Moving my bed farther towards the wall. Stay where you are and I'll move yours. There's not the slightest sense in going in. Thompson——"

Having furiously dragged his bed about, advertising us far and wide, he grabbed mine, with me helpless in it, and after a volume of earthquake shocks and strident gratings I was moved also.

"There," he puffed. "Now you're all right. The rain can't reach you."

"Thank you, dear," I consented. I had no idea where I had been relocated. I heard Man-of-the-House search with hands and feet for his own bed and tumble in.

"Great, isn't it?" he vouchsafed. "Fine for lungs and complexion. Thompson says there's nothing like a rainy night to make you sleep. And you can't catch cold."

"My pillow's wet," I remarked.

"Don't turn it over," ordered Man-of-the-House. "Wait till after the rain, Thompson says, or both sides will get wet."

Man-of-the-House snoozed off. I followed—having first turned my pillow dry side up. Long-postponed sleep stole upon my uneasy nerves; I was going—going—gone, and rambling afield, when more convulsions from the bed of Man-of-the-House ruthlessly jerked me back.

"What's the matter?" I inquired.

"Pshaw!" he deplored. "Did I wake you? I was trying to be quiet. It's raining in on *my* face now, so I'm making up my bed the other way again. Want yours made? Doesn't matter about our feet, you know. These blankets won't soak through."

"I shall not have this bed made up for the third time, or moved," I decreed. "It's all in pieces as it is. If I knew where the door was I'd go in."

"Oh, be game," challenged Man-of-the-House. "The Thompsons would laugh at us if we went inside for this little rain. We'll get some curtains to-morrow if you still want 'em. G'night."

"Good night, dear," I replied. The clock had just struck three. The rain mist occasionally tickled my nose, so I drew my blanket entirely over. Sufficient fresh air leaked through, I am sure. I wondered if the blanket *was* waterproof.

"Thompson says—" murmured Man-of-the-House; and inasmuch as my ears and all were muffled I did not care what Mr. Thompson said.

We ought to have wakened again in a couple of hours, to scuttle in before people were up and about and gazing. But the night had been so disturbed, and the fresh air was so soporific, that when I did wake it was broad day, and with a heart-thump I realized that we had overslept. Why, the sun had risen; likewise Mr. Franckle, our neighbour! I heard him whistling as he fed his chickens; and I heard Mrs. Franckle talking to him—and I smelled coffee.

"Goodness!" I hastily thought. "Man-of-the-House and I must retire at once from public view." A sheet would be advisable; a dressing-gown may not sit ill upon a man, but my Puritan ancestry insisted that a woman employ something more dissembling on a front veranda.

"Ralph!" I whispered, as loudly as I dared.

He stirred, without opening an eye—and the sun was shining full on his face and into his mouth.

"Ralph! Please!"

His mouth moved slightly.

"All right."

"We must get up!" I warned. "Come."

"In a minute."

"But people will see us. Don't you know it's day? We've overslept."

He seemed lost to shame. Still, he couldn't sleep long with that sun on his face; so, wrapping myself Indian-wise in my army blanket, I peered for my slippers. They were both under his bed. I fished for them, to flee.

What I said next made Man-of-the-House open his eyes in earnest.

"Ralph! *The door is locked!*"

"Who locked it?" he demanded.

"Nobody. The wind shut it. I remember now. That was what waked me."

"I didn't hear it," asserted Man-of-the-House.

"I did. And it's locked. We can't get in—out, I mean."

"Sure it's locked?"

"Yes, of course. The spring latch was on. What *shall* we do?" A squad of workmen trooped noisily up the street on our side; their view into our veranda was near and uninterrupted—I fairly dived back into bed, wet blanket and all. I don't *think* the workmen saw me; but they laughed.

"Funny that it should shut," uttered Man-of-the-House. "What did you let it for?"

"I didn't let it shut. How could I?"

"Why didn't you tell me at the time?"

"I didn't know."

He lay basking, and eyed the door. "Sure it's locked?" he repeated.

"Didn't I say so?"

"Did you try it?"

"Of course I tried it! You saw me over there. I want to get in—or out."

Moments were fleeting. The sun was higher. Soon the tradesmen would come for orders, or Mr. Franckle begin with his lawn mower on our side of his lawn.

Man-of-the-House sat up, dangled his feet over the edge of his bed, and rubbed his head.

"I'll be hanged," he proffered vacantly.

"Ralph!" I hissed, "Mr. Franckle is looking right at you!"

"I can't help it. He's seen pyjamas before."

"But not out on verandas."

Man-of-the-House negligently invested himself with his blanket, whence his head protruded, turtle-like. I had the sickening sensation of being animals—a pair of animals—in a zoo cage. Around us was the promenading ground for spectators; and we had no escape, no seclusion—unless we could crawl under our beds, as into a den.

The blank expression upon the visage of Man-of-the-House was maddening.

"What *are* we going to do?" I urged.

"Can't you give me time to think?" he rebuked. "I'll yell over to Franckle. I can tell him how to get in through the cellar window, and he can come up and unlock the door."

Call on Mr. Franckle! Call, and let him march clear across, to us in bed, on our veranda, by daylight, and request him to crawl through a cellar window and let us

out? Not much! A rich morsel for neighbourhood gossip that would be!

"You absolutely shall not call Mr. Franckle," I opposed. Thank goodness Mr. Franckle had disappeared. "Don't you dare to call anybody. Do act intelligently. What time do you think it is? Pretty soon people will be arriving—the postman. And it's washing day, too. Mrs. Mulligan will be here at eight o'clock to do the washing. Can't you climb over the transom?"

He eyed the transom reflectively and blinkingly. It was partially open; locked, of course, in that position.

"Squeeze through there, head first?" he queried. "Well, I don't see how. I'm no sylph."

"Then can't you tear a hole through the screening, and go round and crawl through the cellar window yourself?"

"What do you think I have on?" rebuked Man-of-the-House. "Football clothes? A pretty sight I'd be after bursting through that screen in my pyjamas, to try the cellar window! Happens to be the coal-cellar window, on the Franckle side, too. No, thanks."

He reluctantly arose, with a manner that seemed to blame me for letting the door slam, and stalked about our little enclosure for all the world like a bear inspecting its bars.

"Tight as a drum," he complained. "Suppose we wait for Mrs. Mulligan, and let her get help."

"Mrs. Mulligan sometimes is late and doesn't get here till nine," I informed him. "I don't propose to be on exhibition till that hour. Can't you ram a hole with the bed?"

"And come up through the coal-cellar? Not if I know it. But I'll try the transom if you'll give me a lift up."

"How can I give you any lift up? I'm going to stay where I am until that door's opened."

"All you need to do is to sit up and let me stand on your shoulders," suggested Man-of-the-House. "You can keep your blanket round you."

"Can't you stand on the head of a bed, dear?" I faltered. For us to pose as pyramidal tumblers did not appeal to me. And Ralph weighs nearly fourteen stone—and a blanket wouldn't be much padding. But the beds had headrails which looked strong enough.

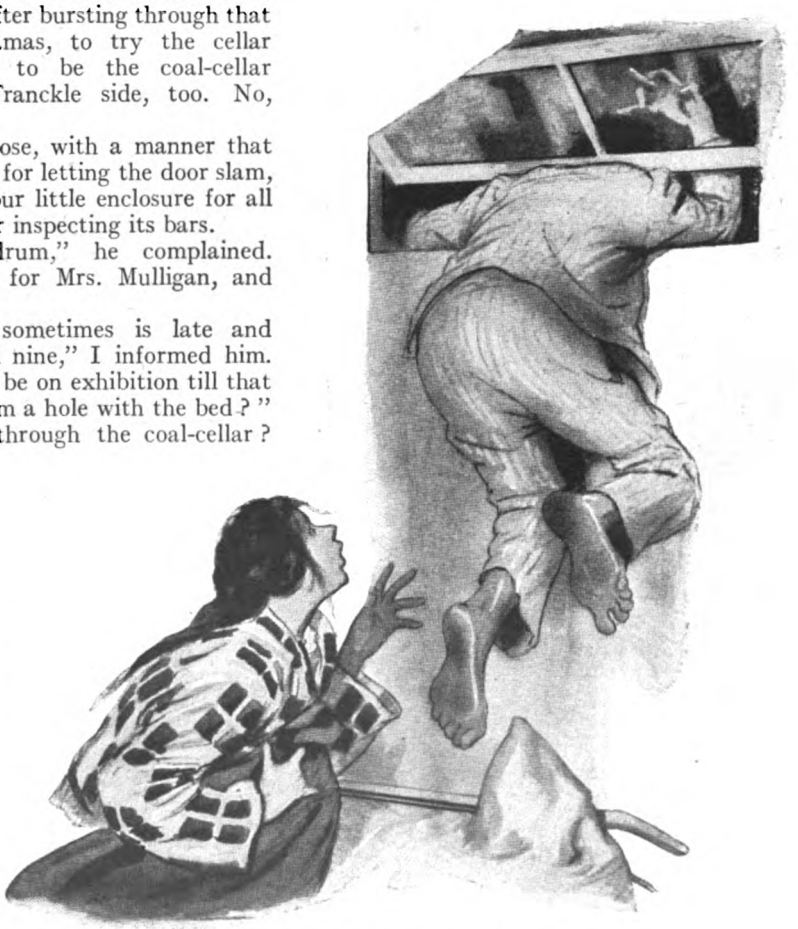
"You'll have to hold the thing steady then," bade Man-of-the-House.

So we shoved a bed into position under the transom; I crouched as low as I could, and with one look about to pray that the coast was clear firmly grasped the headrail. Ralph gingerly mounted.

"Your blanket, dear!" I gasped.

"I can't work in any blanket," he growled.

Thank heaven, the coast *was* clear. Mr. Franckle was nowhere in sight, and nobody was passing. Of course, people probably were peering out of their windows.



"HE LOOKED AS IF HE WERE BEING GUILLOTINED!"

I anxiously clutched the headrail and watched Ralph. Balancing on tiptoe, he did look too funny, as he reached and grunted and tugged at the screen over the transom. The screen was old; with a wrench that almost threw him backward he tore it loose—and then he recklessly dropped it. No screen ever made more noise. Why, it sounded like——!

"Ralph!" I cried, in dismay. But the deed had been done. Now he was grunting afresh and pulling and pushing at the transom itself. It sprang and creaked. Oh, wouldn't it give way?

"Can't you move it, dear?" I implored—for to hold that headrail was rather difficult.

"Confounded—thing!" he panted, and with a ripping squeak it did give way; he had broken the rod attachment, so that—goodness!—the transom swung free.

He attempted to climb up and in. By this time his pyjamas were well above his ankles, and as he struggled a serious gap widened at his waist line. He hoisted himself, and lifted first one foot and then the other, grunting painfully. It seemed to be necessary for him to prop the transom open with his neck and one hand, until he could put a leg—he was undecided which leg—up in beside his head, so that he could turn round in the transom space and descend on the other side, feet first, or at least foot first. The rest of him would follow.

This, plainly, was intricate; and I could only hope and watch his contortions and listen to him grunt, while I held the rail with all my strength and guided his slipperless feet back to it after he made his vain little jumps. His legs were awfully dangly and haphazard, and kept me busy—and suddenly I heard a voice, near—very near.

"Can I be of any assistance?"

It startled me. I uttered a shriek and turned, and there, on the lawn just outside our cage, stood Mr. Franckle, smiling blandly!

"Oh, no!" I gasped, uncivilly. "Go away! We're only trying to get in—out, I mean. Please go away!"

At that instant issued from Man-of-the-House an appalling burst of exclamations and queries. He had kicked the rail down, or it had fallen, while my grasp had been loosened, and now he hung, wildly feeling for it with his bare feet, and the transom had slipped and had closed on the back of his neck. Both hands were clawing at it and endeavouring to hold fast. He looked as if he were being guillotined!

"Yes!" I frenziedly hailed of Mr. Franckle, who had politely turned away. "Crawl in through the coal-cellar window, quick! Ralph is caught. He was trying to get in and open our door. It's locked. Do hurry!"

"AFTER HIS PASSAGE OF THE COAL-CELLAR WINDOW HE WAS A SIGHT."

Off hastened Mr. Franckle. I clutched Man-of-the-House by the ankles to support him.

"Wait a moment," I begged. "Mr. Franckle's gone through the coal-cellar. He'll help you!"

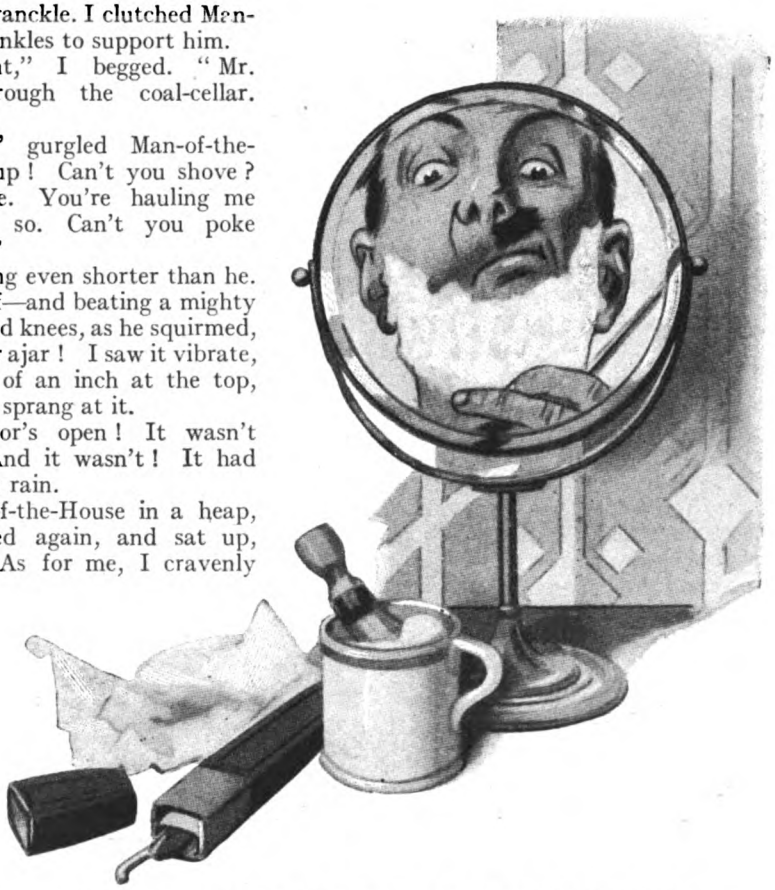
"Holy thunder!" gurgled Man-of-the-House. "Hold me up! Can't you shove? No! Let go of me. You're hauling me tighter. Don't pull so. Can't you poke this transom loose?"

But I couldn't, being even shorter than he. He loosened it himself—and beating a mighty tattoo with his feet and knees, as he squirmed, he hammered the door ajar! I saw it vibrate, it yielded a quarter of an inch at the top, and with a glad cry I sprang at it.

"Ralph! The door's open! It wasn't locked, after all." And it wasn't! It had only warped with the rain.

Down came Man-of-the-House in a heap, bounced high, landed again, and sat up, rubbing his neck. As for me, I cravenly dashed within, minutes were precious; and, of course, in the middle of the dining-room, I met the breathless Mr. Franckle.

After his passage of the coal-cellar window he was a *sight;* but this was no situation for a parley.



"IN HIS SUPERABUNDANT ENERGY HE SHAVED OFF THE NEW MOUSTACHE HE HAD BEEN CULTIVATING."

"So sorry," I said, circling by. "Ralph opened it. We so enjoy sleeping out. We *thought* it was locked. If you'll excuse me——"

"Certainly," panted the polite Mr. Franckle. "Not at all, not at all. Delighted, I'm sure."

And then, praise be, I was safely on the stairs at last. From the bedroom above I heard Man-of-the-House. "Sorry to have troubled you, old man. But this sleeping-out idea is great. We never minded the rain a bit. Why don't you and Mrs. Franckle rig up some sort of a place?" He hospitably released Mr. Franckle by the back door, and came upstairs himself.

We weren't at all discouraged. At any rate, Man-of-the-House wasn't; and while he anointed his toes and knees and neck and we dressed, and Man-of-the-House, in his superabundant energy, shaved off the new moustache he had been cultivating for a week, we discussed ways and means of giving us more seclusion from people and the elements when we resumed our sleeping out. As for feeling like a prize-fighter, well, I did—like some prize-fighters after the battle. And Ralph *looked* it.

That afternoon Mrs. Thompson called. She didn't owe me a call; she came, she said, because she understood that we, too, were sleeping out of doors, and she wanted to hear if we enjoyed it.

"Oh, thoroughly!" I assured her. "We enjoyed even the rain on us. Our blankets are waterproof, you know."

"You don't mean you slept out in the rain, do you?" she asked, amazed.

"Yes, indeed," I proudly answered. "And you do, too, don't you? But we haven't even curtains."

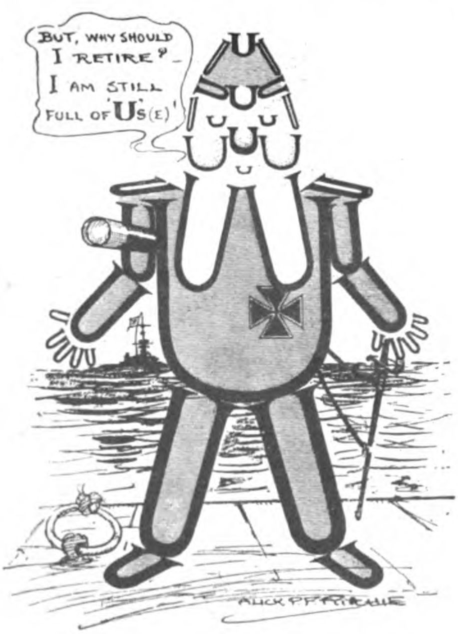
"Mercy, no!" ejaculated Mrs. Thompson. "When it begins to rain we always go inside at once, where we can be comfortable. The curtains are apt to flap, and things get damp, and we find we sleep much better inside."

MR. ALICK P. F. RITCHIE.
Photo. by the Pembroke Studios.

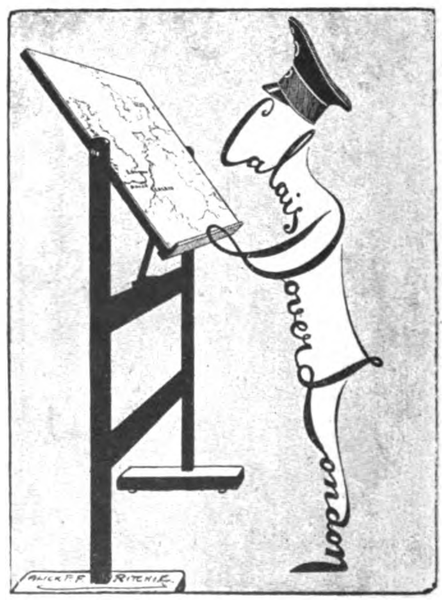
THE WHIMSICALITIES OF ALICK P. F. RITCHIE.

MR. ALICK RITCHIE, as readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE have recently had special opportunities of appreciating, does not lack inventiveness. His ingenious portraits of celebrities made up of straight lines, squares, circles, and other geometrical figures are well known, and his sly travesties of the Cubists, the Futurists, and other eccentric products of the modern movement in art have caused unholy joy to the honest, if sometimes despised, Philistine. He has a Puck-like gift of freakishness, and a talent for pictorial practical joking that is truly impish.

It would be difficult to discuss Mr. Ritchie's humour seriously, and the paradox shall not be attempted. He would probably be as loath to claim his comic drawings as Art (with a capital A) as a low comedian to pretend to rank with Mrs. Siddons. He reminds one, indeed, of the music-hall performer who keeps his audience amused with a nimble succession of witty "gags" and ingenious "stunts," and such jargon of the stage seems well adapted to his peculiar style. The neat retort, the apt comment, are always on the tip of his tongue—or, at least, upon the point of his pen—and the "gag" comes pat, no matter what the incident which prompts it.

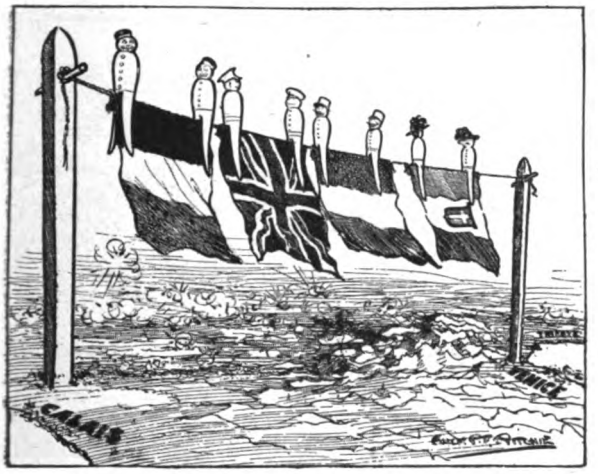


VON TIRPITZ, THE MAN OF U'S—FOR WHOM GERMANY HAS NOW NO USE.
By permission of "The Bystander."



QUITE A SIMPLE THING—BY THE MAP.
By permission of "The Bystander."

This readiness has been well exemplified by Mr. Ritchie's contributions to the pictorial humours of the war. Nothing could be happier, for example, than the portrait which we reproduce of Von Tirpitz. The German admiral has received countless attentions from the caricaturists of neutral and allied countries since the war began, and thanks to their loving care his whiskers have achieved a



STILL HOLDING THEIR OWN ALL ALONG THE LINE.
By permission of "The Bystander."

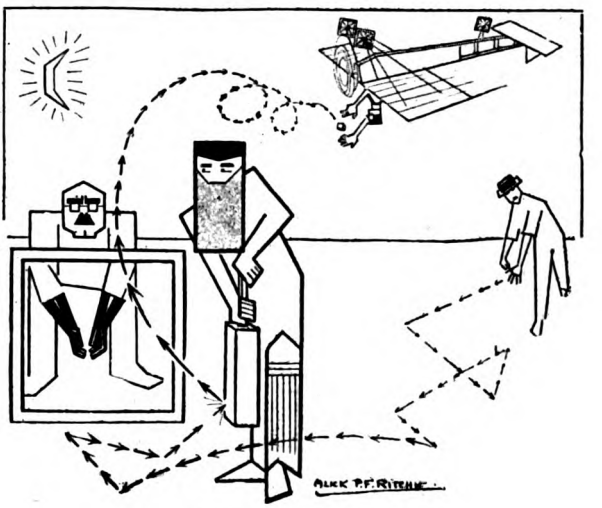
the entire figure that is not obtained out of a perfectly straightforward writing of the words Calais-Dover-London. The calligraphy is perfect, in fact, and so is the portrait. And as a crowning touch the "simplicity" of the facial expression is quite brilliant.

Another ingenious pictorial pun is the sketch of the Allies, in the guise of clothes-pegs, "holding their own" (to wit, their national flags) "all along the line"—that line which stretches across Europe from the North Sea to the Adriatic.

This is an excellent instance of the artist's alertness in detecting a covert jest.

world-wide celebrity, but no better image of him has ever been devised than this. As a likeness one may fairly claim that it is U-nique!

Equally cunning and ingenious is the portrait of the Crown Prince entitled "Quite a Simple Thing—by the Map." It *is* a simple thing—so simple that one wonders at a first glance why nobody else happened to think of it. But consider the sketch carefully and you will find it is not quite so easy as it looks. Except for the hat, which is superimposed as a finishing touch, there is not a line in



FUTURIST CRICKET.
By permission of "London Mail."

A STUDY IN STRAIGHT LINES AND CURVES.

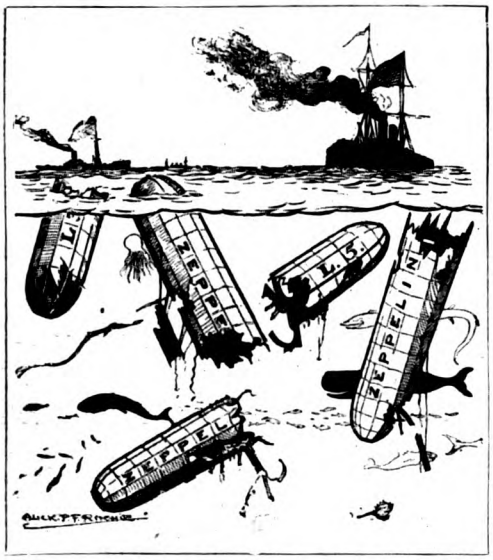
"Well, uncle, I can hardly believe *you* are in *straightened* circumstances."

Mention has already been made of Mr. Ritchie's feud with the Cubists—if that can be called a feud which is a campaign scarcely of ridicule even, but rather of gentle raillery.

There is a special interest in these guerrilla attacks by a humorist upon his solemn victims, because there is reason to believe that Mr. Ritchie was himself the first artist to adopt the straight-lines-and-curves convention which before the war had become in one form or another so fashionable among the ultra-modern.

Readers with good memories may recall some of Alick Ritchie's efforts along these lines (and curves) which appeared in *Pick-Me-Up* during the brilliant days of that now defunct periodical. As essays in ingenuity they were perhaps the cleverest things which even their perpetrator has

evolved, and the chief, if not the only, difference between them and the works of our latter-day geniuses is that while Mr. Ritchie did his for a joke, his successors (or dare one say imitators?) do theirs as a kind of rite.

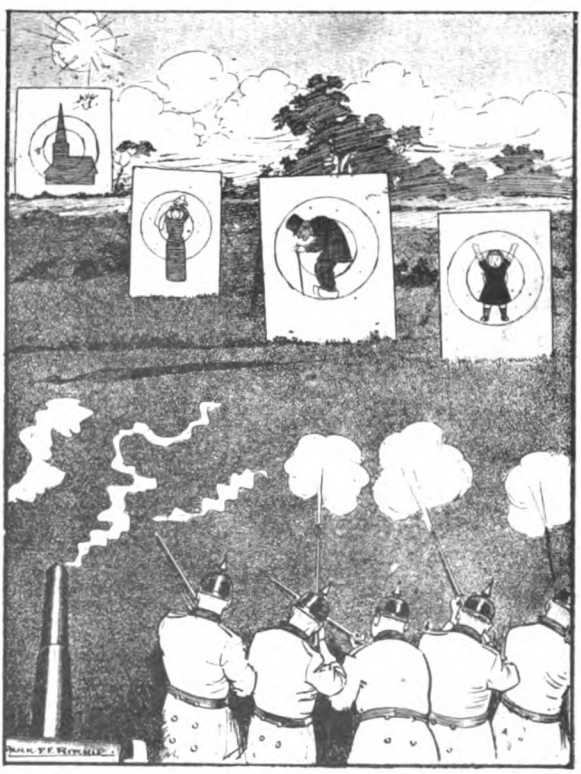


GERMAN "SUBMARINES" ARE A REAL DANGER TO SHIPPING. *By permission of* ["London Mail."

GERMANS PRACTISING "FIRST AID TO THE DROWNING." *By permission of* ["Scots Pictorial."

The reader can judge for himself, from the example of these early pictorial jests on the previous page, the resourcefulness of the artist who invented them. Another amusing skit at the expense of the eccentric moderns is the drawing called "Futurist Cricket," with its grotesque portraits of W. G. Grace batting and Rudyard Kipling keeping wicket.

To revert, however, to the war, which has laid Cubism, Futurism, and all kindred "isms" temporarily, if not permanently, on the shelf. That Mr. Ritchie has a pretty gift of irony and satire, as well as fun, is shown by several of the drawings in these pages. For irony one may commend the sketch which illustrates the simple statement: "German 'submarines' are a real danger to shipping." Germany has boasted much of the havoc which her underwater craft would work at sea, but we may plausibly doubt whether she ever contemplated the reinforcement of U-boats by Zeppelins in the manner which the artist has so dryly indicated.



BEFORE THE WAR — GERMAN SOLDIERS ENGAGING IN TARGET PRACTICE. *By permission of* ["The Bystander."

As to satire, even a Hun should wince at the imaginary picture

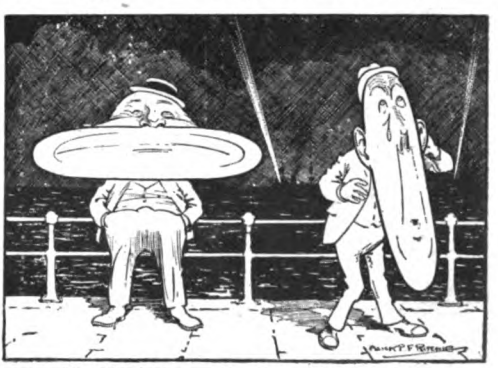
FROM THE DIARY OF A PRUSSIAN SOLDIER:
"This morning, single-handed, I have confiscated the enemy's food supplies."
By permission of "London Mail."

of German soldiers engaging in target practice in preparation for war. Children, babies, women, and old men are the effigies upon which the marksmen's skill is whetted, while for the artillery there is provided the silhouette of a distant church. A cartoon such as this *ought* to seem the vain and

HOW IT FEELS TO "MERE MAN."
By permission of "London Opinion."

rather foolish gibe of a scurrilous foe; it is an awful reflection that the recorded doings of the Germans in Belgium, Poland, and indeed in every theatre of war, give it dire point and justification. A companion piece of satire shows "German sailors practising 'first aid to the drowning.'" The chastisement it inflicts is that of the bludgeon rather than the rapier, but with the record of German vessels in the matter of saving lives at sea — even those of women and children—fresh in our memory, who shall say it is not more than merited?

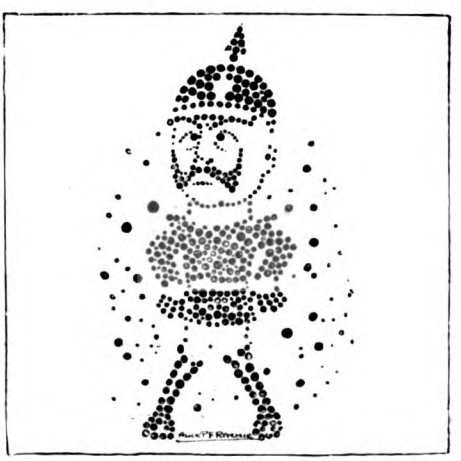
Less grim, yet biting enough in its sarcasm, is the sketch which illustrates an entry in the diary of a Prussian soldier. "This morning, single-handed, I have confiscated the enemy's food supplies." The gallant diarist is seen



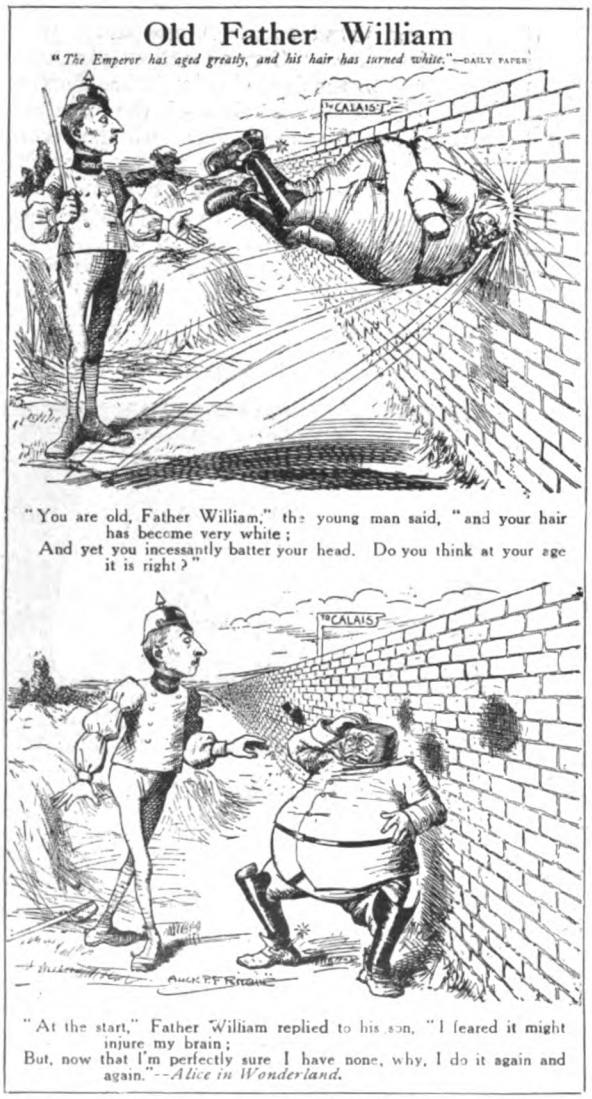
The Optimist. The Pessimist.
ZEPPELIN EXPRESSIONS.
By permission of "The Bystander."

enjoying the spoils of victory, while the "enemy" is seen bewailing his loss with a vehemence that would be laughable were it not pathetic.

With his portraits of the Zeppelin optimist and pessimist, however, Mr. Ritchie reverts to the exuberant vein in which he is more



ABSOLUTELY DOTTY.
By permission of "The Bystander."

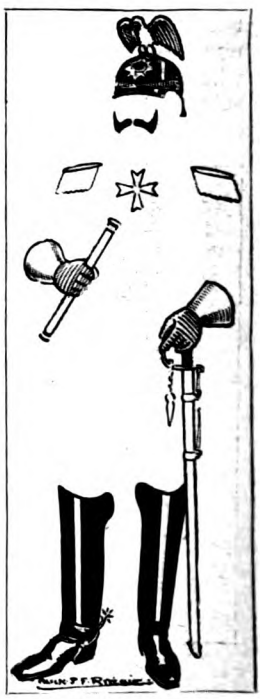


By permission of "The Bystander."

familiar. Grotesquely as the opposing types are portrayed, one cannot fail to recognize them both as intimate acquaintances.

It would be strange if Mr. Ritchie had been able to keep his hands off the Kaiser—we do not speak literally, though we have little doubt that, if such a glorious opportunity were given him, the artist's invention would quickly devise a new and appropriate "stunt" for the occasion! But that he has made no attempt to resist the temptation to commit that crime of *lèse-majesté* which is so heinous an offence in the eyes of the solemn Teuton is evident from the two lapses given here. In the one case we have a parody of Tenniel's familiar illustrations to the poem of "Old Father William," as recited by the immortal Alice. Father William becomes Kaiser William in Mr. Ritchie's adaptation, while the inquiring youth who plied his aged relative with such persistent and impertinent questions is replaced by the Crown Prince, who is admirably endowed by Nature to sustain the *rôle* of Tenniel's rustic looney. Kaiser William in the second portion of the sketch is hardly recognizable at a first glance, but this is largely the effect of his battered and truncated head. Substitute Verdun for Calais and Mr. Ritchie's *jeu d'esprit*, though it was published in 1914, holds as good to-day as it did when it was first perpetrated.

Finally, there is the neat little portrait of the Kaiser which the artist has succinctly labelled "Not All There." This, too, was drawn and published in the early days of the war, but it would not be surprising to find that Mr. Ritchie has anticipated with it the verdict of history. "Not all there" may well prove to be a prophetic summary of the Hohenzollern monarch. "Not there at all," which sums up the sanguine expectation of some folk, is the title we suggest for a companion portrait that we should much like to see the ingenious artist grapple with.



NOT ALL THERE.
By permission of "The Bystander."

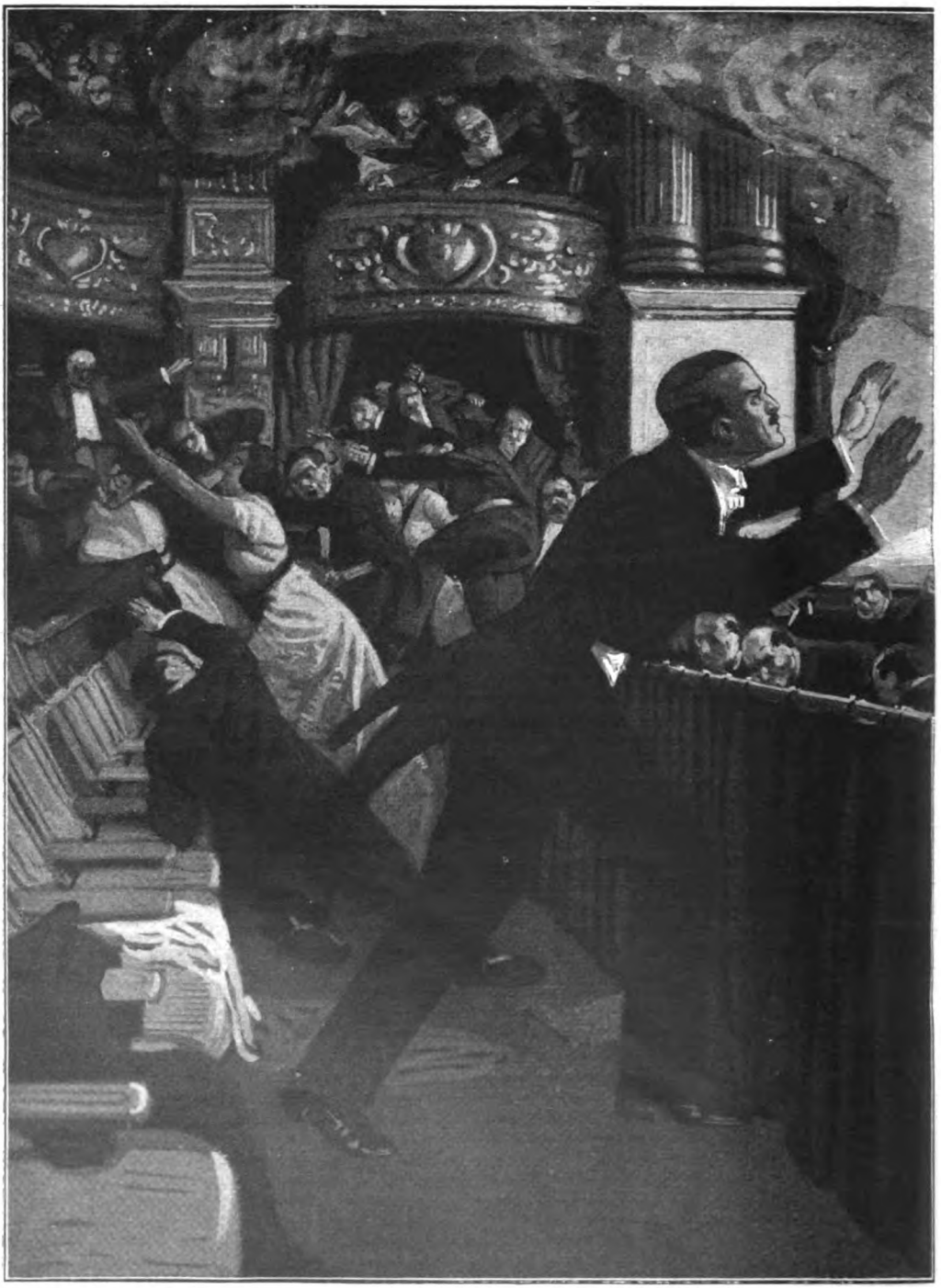
The Safety-Curtain

A COMPLETE NOVEL

By

ETHEL M. DELL

AUTHOR OF "THE WAY OF AN EAGLE" Etc



"FOR A SINGLE INSTANT—THE LAST—THE TREMBLING, GLITTERING FIGURE SEEMED TO HESITATE, THEN LIKE A STREAK OF LIGHTNING LEAPT STRAIGHT OVER THE FOOTLIGHTS INTO THE OUTSTRETCHED ARMS."

(*See page* 228.)

The Safety-Curtain.

By

ETHEL M. DELL.

Illustrated by Graham Simmons.

CHAPTER I.

THE ESCAPE.

A GREAT shout of applause went through the crowded hall as the Dragon-Fly Dance came to an end, and the Dragon-Fly, with quivering, iridescent wings, flashed away.

It was the third encore. The dance was a marvellous one, a piece of dazzling intricacy, of swift and unexpected subtleties, of almost superhuman grace. It must have proved utterly exhausting to any ordinary being; but to that creature of fire and magic it was no more than a glittering fantasy, a whirl too swift for the eye to follow or the brain to grasp.

"Is it a boy or a girl?" asked a man in the front row.

"It's a boy, of course," said his neighbour, shortly.

He was the only member of the audience who did not take part in that third encore. He sat squarely in his seat throughout the uproar, watching the stage with piercing grey eyes that never varied in their stern directness. His brows were drawn above them—thick, straight brows that spoke to a formidable strength of purpose. He was plainly a man who was accustomed to hew his own way through life, despising the trodden paths, overcoming all obstacles by grim persistence.

Louder and louder swelled the tumult. It was evident that nothing but a repetition of the

Copyright, 1916, by Ethel M. Dell.

wonder-dance would content the audience. They yelled themselves hoarse for it; and when, light as air, incredibly swift, the green Dragon-Fly darted back, they outdid themselves in the madness of their welcome. The noise seemed to shake the building.

Only the man in the front row with the iron-grey eyes and iron-hard mouth made no movement or sound of any sort. He merely watched with unchanging intentness the face that gleamed, ashen-white, above the shimmering metallic green tights that clothed the dancer's slim body.

The noise ceased as the wild tarantella proceeded. There fell a deep hush, broken only by the silver notes of a flute played somewhere behind the curtain. The dancer's movements were wholly without sound. The quivering, whirling feet scarcely seemed to touch the floor. It was a dance of inspiration, possessing a strange and irresistible fascination, a weird and meteoric rush, that held the onlookers with bated breath.

It lasted for perhaps two minutes, that intense and trance-like stillness; then, like a stone flung into glassy depths, a woman's scream rudely shattered it, a piercing, terror-stricken scream that brought the rapt audience back to earth with a shock as the liquid music of the flute suddenly ceased.

"Fire!" cried the voice. "Fire! Fire!"

There was an instant of horrified inaction, and in that instant a tongue of flame shot like a fiery serpent through the closed curtains behind the dancer. In a moment the cry was caught up and repeated in a dozen directions, and even as it went from mouth to mouth the safety-curtain began to descend.

The dancer was forgotten, swept as it were from the minds of the audience as an insect whose life was of no account. From the back of the stage came a roar like the roar of an open furnace. A great wave of heat rushed into the hall, and people turned like terrified, stampeding animals and made for the exits.

The Dragon-Fly still stood behind the foot-lights, poised as if for flight, glancing this way and that, shimmering from head to foot in the awful glare that spread behind the descending curtain. It was evident that retreat behind the scenes was impossible, and in another moment or two that falling curtain would cut off the only way left.

But suddenly, before the dancer's hunted eyes, a man leapt forward. He held up his arms, making himself heard in clear command above the dreadful babel behind him.

"Quick!" he cried. "Jump!"

The wild eyes flashed down at him, wavered, and were caught in his compelling gaze. For a single instant—the last—the trembling, glittering figure seemed to hesitate, then like a streak of lightning leapt straight over the footlights into the outstretched arms.

They caught and held with unwavering iron strength. In the midst of a turmoil indescribable the Dragon-Fly hung quivering on the man's breast, the gauze wings shattered in that close, sustaining grip. The safety-curtain came down with a thud, shutting off the horrors behind, and a loud voice yelled through the building assuring the seething crowd of safety.

But panic had set in. The heat was terrific. People fought and struggled to reach the exits.

The dancer turned in the man's arms and raised a deathly face, gripping his shoulders with clinging, convulsive fingers. Two wild dark eyes looked up to his, desperately afraid, seeking reassurance.

He answered that look briefly with stern composure.

"Be still! I shall save you if I can."

The dancer's heart was beating in mad terror against his own, but at his words it seemed to grow a little calmer. Quiveringly the white lips spoke.

"There is a door—close to the stage—a little door—behind a green curtain—if we could reach it."

"Ah!" the man said.

His eyes went to the stage, from the proximity of which the audience had fled affrighted. He spied the curtain.

Only a few people intervened between him and it, and they were struggling to escape in the opposite direction.

"Quick!" gasped the dancer.

He turned, snatched up his great-coat, and wrapped it about the slight, boyish figure. The great dark eyes that shone out of the small white face thanked him for the action. The clinging hands slipped from his shoulders and clasped his arm. Together they faced the fearful heat that raged behind the safety-curtain.

They reached the small door, gasping. It was almost hidden by green drapery. But the dancer was evidently familiar with it. In a moment it was open. A great burst of smoke met them. The man drew back. But a quick hand closed upon his, drawing him on. He went blindly, feeling as if he were stepping into the heart of a furnace, yet strangely determined to go forward, whatever came of it.

The smoke and the heat were frightful, suffocating in their intensity. The roar of the unseen flames seemed to fill the world.

The door swung to behind them. They stood in seething darkness.

But again the small clinging hand pulled upon the man.

"Quick!" the dancer cried again.

Choked and gasping, but resolute still, he followed. They ran through a passage that must have been on the very edge of the vortex of flame, for behind them ere they left it a red light glared.

It showed another door in front of them with which the dancer struggled a moment, then flung open. They burst through it together, and the cold night wind met them like an angel of deliverance.

The man gasped and gasped again, filling his parched lungs with its healing freshness. His companion uttered a strange, high laugh, and dragged him forth into the open.

They emerged into a narrow alley, surrounded by tall houses. The night was dark and wet. The rain pattered upon them as they staggered out into a space that seemed deserted. The sudden quiet after the awful turmoil they had just left was like the silence of death.

The man stood still and wiped the sweat in a dazed fashion from his face. The little dancer reeled back against the wall, panting desperately.

For a space neither moved. Then, terribly, the silence was rent by a crash and the roar of flames. An awful redness leapt across the darkness of the night, revealing each to each.

The dancer stood up suddenly and made an odd little gesture of farewell; then, swiftly, to the man's amazement, turned back towards the door through which they had burst but a few seconds before.

He stared for a moment—only a moment—not believing he saw aright; then with a single stride he reached and roughly seized the small, oddly-draped figure.

"THE MAN DREW BACK. BUT A QUICK HAND CLOSED UPON HIS, DRAWING HIM ON."

He heard a faint cry, and there ensued a sharp struggle against his hold; but he pinioned the thin young arms without ceremony, gripping them fast. In the awful, flickering glare above them his eyes shone downwards, dominant, relentless.

"Are you mad?" he said.

The small dark head was shaken vehemently, with gestures curiously suggestive of an imprisoned insect. It was as if wild wings fluttered against captivity.

And then all in a moment the struggling ceased, and in a low, eager voice the captive began to plead.

"Please, please let me go! You don't know—you don't understand. I came—because—because—you called. But I was wrong—I was wrong to come. You couldn't keep me—you wouldn't keep me—against my will!"

"Do you want to die, then?" the man demanded. "Are you tired of life?"

His eyes still shone piercingly down, but they read but little, for the dancer's were firmly closed against them, even while the dark cropped head nodded a strangely vigorous affirmative.

"Yes, that is it! I am so tired—so tired of life! Don't keep me! Let me go—while I have the strength!" The little, white, sharp-featured face, with its tight-shut eyes and childish, quivering mouth, was painfully

pathetic. "Death can't be more dreadful than life," the low voice urged. "If I don't go back—I shall be so sorry afterwards. Why should one live—to suffer?"

It was piteously spoken, so piteously that for a moment the man seemed moved to compassion. His hold relaxed; but when the little form between his hands took swift advantage and strained afresh for freedom he instantly tightened his grip.

"No, no!" he said, harshly. "There are other things in life. You don't know what you are doing. You are not responsible."

The dark eyes opened upon him then—wide, reproachful, mysteriously far-seeing. "I shall not be responsible—if you make me live," said the Dragon-Fly, with the air of one risking a final desperate throw.

It was almost an open challenge, and it was accepted instantly, with grim decision. "Very well. The responsibility is mine," the man said, briefly. "Come with me!"

His arm encircled the narrow shoulders. He drew his young companion unresisting from the spot. They left the glare of the furnace behind them, and threaded their way through dark and winding alleys back to the throbbing life of the city thoroughfares, back into the whirl and stress of that human existence which both had nearly quitted—and one had strenuously striven to quit—so short a time before.

CHAPTER II.

NOBODY'S BUSINESS.

"My name is Merryon," the man said, curtly. "I am a major in the Indian Army—home on leave. Now tell me about yourself!"

He delivered the information in the brief, aggressive fashion that seemed to be characteristic of him, and he looked over the head of his young visitor as he did so, almost as if he made the statement against his will.

The visitor, still clad in his great-coat, crouched like a dog on the hearthrug before the fire in Merryon's sitting-room, and gazed with wide, unblinking eyes into the flames.

After a few moments Merryon's eyes descended to the dark head and surveyed it critically. The collar of his coat was turned up all round it. It was glistening with rain-drops and looked like the head of some small, furry animal.

As if aware of that straight regard, the dancer presently spoke, without turning or moving an eyelid.

"What you are doesn't matter to anyone except yourself. And what I am doesn't matter either. It's just—nobody's business."

"I see," said Merryon.

A faint smile crossed his grim, hard-featured face. He sat down in a low chair near his guest and drew to his side a small table that bore a tray of refreshments. He poured out a glass of wine and held it towards the queer, elfin figure crouched upon his hearth.

The dark eyes suddenly flashed from the fire to his face. "Why do you offer me—that?" the dancer demanded, in a voice that was curiously vibrant, as though it strove to conceal some overwhelming emotion. "Why don't you give me—a man's drink?"

"Because I think this will suit you better," Merryon said; and he spoke with a gentleness that was oddly at variance with the frown that drew his brows.

The dark eyes stared up at him, scared and defiant, for the passage of several seconds; then, very suddenly, the tension went out of the white, pinched face. It screwed up like the face of a hurt child, and all in a moment the little, huddled figure collapsed on the floor at his feet, while sobs—a woman's quivering, piteous sobs—filled the silence of the room.

Merryon's own face was a curious mixture of pity and constraint as he set down the glass and stooped forward over the shaking, anguished form.

"Look here, child!" he said, and whatever else was in his voice it certainly held none of the hardness habitual to it. "You're upset—unnerved. Don't cry so! Whatever you've been through, it's over. No one can make you go back. Do you understand? You're free!"

He laid his hand, with the clumsiness of one little accustomed to console, upon the bowed black head.

"Don't!" he said again. "Don't cry so! What the devil does it matter? You're safe enough with me. I'm not the sort of bounder to give you away."

She drew a little nearer to him. "You—you're not a bounder—at all," she assured him between her sobs. "You're just—a gentleman. That's what you are!"

"All right," said Merryon. "Leave off crying!"

He spoke with the same species of awkward kindliness that characterized his actions, and there must have been something strangely comforting in his speech, for the little dancer's tears ceased as abruptly as they had begun. She dashed a trembling hand across her eyes.

"Who's crying?" she said.

He uttered a brief, half-grudging laugh. "That's better. Now drink some wine! Yes, I insist! You must eat something, too. You look half-starved."

She accepted the wine, sitting in an acrobatic attitude on the floor facing him. She drank it, and an odd sparkle of mischief shot up in her great eyes. She surveyed him with an impish expression—much as a grasshopper might survey a toad.

"Are you married?" she inquired, unexpectedly.

"No," said Merryon, shortly. "Why?"

She gave a little laugh that had a catch in it. "I was only thinking that your wife wouldn't like me much. Women are so suspicious."

Merryon turned aside, and began to pour out a drink for himself. There was something strangely elusive about this little creature whom Fortune had flung to him. He wondered what he should do with her. Was she too old for a foundling hospital?

"How old are you?" he asked, abruptly.

She did not answer.

He looked at her, frowning.

"Don't!" she said. "It's ugly. I'm not quite forty. How old are you?"

"What?" said Merryon.

"Not—quite—forty," she said again, with extreme distinctness. "I'm small for my age, I know. But I shall never grow any more now. How old did you say you were?"

Merryon's eyes regarded her piercingly. "I should like the truth," he said, in his short, grim way.

She made a grimace that turned into an impish smile. "Then you must stick to the things that matter," she said. "That is—nobody's business."

He tried to look severe, but very curiously failed. He picked up a plate of sandwiches to mask a momentary confusion, and offered it to her.

Again, with simplicity, she accepted, and there fell a silence between them while she ate, her eyes again upon the fire. Her face, in repose, was the saddest thing he had ever seen. More than ever did she make him think of a child that had been hurt.

She finished her sandwich and sat for a while lost in thought. Merryon leaned back in his chair, watching her. The little, pointed features possessed no beauty, yet they had that which drew the attention irresistibly. The delicate charm of her dancing was somehow expressed in every line. There was fire, too—a strange, bewitching fire—behind the thick black lashes.

Very suddenly that fire was turned upon him again. With a swift, darting movement she knelt up in front of him, her clasped hands on his knees.

"Why did you save me just now?" she said. "Why wouldn't you let me die?"

He looked full at her. She vibrated like a winged creature on the verge of taking flight. But her eyes—her eyes sought his with a strange assurance, as though they saw in him a comrade.

"Why did you make me live when I wanted to die?" she insisted. "Is life so desirable? Have you found it so?"

His brows contracted at the last question, even while his mouth curved cynically. "Some people find it so," he said.

"WHY DON'T YOU GIVE ME—A MAN'S DRINK?"

"But you?" she said, and there was almost accusation in her voice. "Have the gods been kind to you? Or have they thrown you the dregs—just the dregs?"

The passionate note in the words, subdued though it was, was not to be mistaken. It stirred him oddly, making him see her for the first time as a woman rather than as the fantastic being, half-elf, half-child, whom he had wrested from the very jaws of Death against her will. He leaned slowly forward, marking the deep, deep shadows about her eyes, the vivid red of her lips.

"What do you know about the dregs?" he said.

She beat her hands with a small, fierce movement on his knees, mutely refusing to answer.

"Ah, well," he said, "I don't know why I should answer either. But I will. Yes, I've had dregs—dregs—and nothing but dregs, for the last fifteen years."

He spoke with a bitterness that he scarcely attempted to restrain, and the girl at his feet nodded—a wise little feminine nod.

"I knew you had. It comes harder to a man, doesn't it?"

"I don't know why it should," said Merryon, moodily.

"I do," said the Dragon-Fly. "It's because men were made to boss creation. See? You're one of the bosses, you are. You've been led to expect a lot, and because you haven't had it you feel you've been cheated. Life is like that. It's just a thing that mocks at you. I know."

She nodded again, and an odd, will-o'-the-wisp smile flitted over her face.

"You seem to know—something of life," the man said.

She uttered a queer, choking laugh. "Life is a big, big swindle," she said. "The only happy people in the world are those who haven't found it out. But you—you say there are other things in life besides suffering. How did you know that if—if you've never had anything but dregs?"

"Ah!" Merryon said. "You have me there."

He was still looking full into those shadowy eyes with a curious, dawning fellowship in his own.

"You have me there," he repeated. "But I do know. I was happy enough once, till——" He stopped.

"Things went wrong?" insinuated the Dragon-Fly, sitting down on her heels in a childish attitude of attention.

"Yes," Merryon admitted, in his sullen fashion. "Things went wrong. I found I was the son of a thief. He's dead now, thank Heaven. But he dragged me under first. I've been at odds with life ever since."

"But a man can start again," said the Dragon-Fly, with her air of worldly wisdom.

"Oh, yes, I did that." Merryon's smile was one of exceeding bitterness. "I enlisted and went to South Africa. I hoped for death, and I won a commission instead."

The girl's eyes shone with interest. "But that was luck!" she said.

"Oh, yes; it was luck of a sort—the damnable, unsatisfactory sort. I entered the Indian Army, and I've got on. But socially I'm practically an outcast. They're polite to me, but they leave me outside. The man who rose from the ranks—the fellow with a shady past—fought shy of by the women, just tolerated by the men, covertly despised by the youngsters. That's the sort of person I am. It galled me once. I'm used to it now."

Merryon's grim voice went into grimmer silence. He was staring sombrely into the fire, almost as if he had forgotten his companion.

There fell a pause; then, "You poor dear!" said the Dragon-Fly, sympathetically. "But I expect you are like that, you know. I expect it's a bit your own fault."

He looked at her in surprise.

"No, I'm not meaning anything nasty," she assured him, with that quick smile of hers whose sweetness he was just beginning to realize. "But after a bad knock-out like yours a man naturally looks for trouble. He gets suspicious, and a snub or two does the rest. He isn't taking any more. It's a pity you're not married. A woman would have known how to hold her own, and a bit over—for you."

"I wouldn't ask any woman to share the life I lead," said Merryon, with bitter emphasis. "Not that any woman would if I did. I'm not a ladies' man."

She laughed for the first time, and he started at the sound, for it was one of pure, girlish merriment.

"My! You are modest!" she said. "And yet you don't look it, somehow." She turned her right-hand palm upwards on his knee, tacitly inviting his. "You're a good one to talk of life being worth while, aren't you?" she said.

He accepted the frank invitation, faintly smiling. "Well, I know the good things are there," he said, "though I've missed them."

"You'll marry and be happy yet," she said, with confidence. "But I shouldn't put it off too long if I were you."

He shook his head. His hand still half-consciously grasped hers. "Ask a woman to marry the son of one of the most famous swindlers ever known? I think not," he said. "Why, even you——" His eyes regarded her, comprehended her. He stopped abruptly.

"What about me?" she said.

He hesitated, possessed by an odd embarrassment. The dark eyes were lifted quite openly to his. It came to him that they were accustomed to the stare of multitudes—they met his look so serenely, so impenetrably.

"I don't know how we got on to the subject of my affairs," he said, after a moment. "It seems to me that yours are the most important just now. Aren't you going to tell me anything about them?"

She gave a small, emphatic shake of the head. "I should have been dead by this time if you hadn't interfered," she said. "I haven't got any affairs."

"Then it's up to me to look after you," Merryon said, quietly.

But she shook her head at that more vigorously still. "You look after me!" Her voice trembled on a note of derision. "Sure, you're joking!" she protested. "I've looked after myself ever since I was eight."

"And made a success of it?" Merryon asked.

Her eyes shot swift defiance. "That's

nobody's business but my own," she said. "You know what I think of life."

Merryon's hand closed slowly upon hers. "There seems to be a pair of us," he said. "You can't refuse to let me help you—for fellowship's sake."

The red lips trembled suddenly. The dark eyes fell before his for the first time. She spoke almost under her breath. "I'm too old—to take help from a man—like that."

He bent slightly towards her. "What has age to do with it?"

"Everything." Her eyes remained downcast; the hand he held was trying to wriggle free, but he would not suffer it.

"Circumstances alter cases," he said. "I accepted the responsibility when I saved you."

"But you haven't the least idea what to do with me," said the Dragon-Fly, with a forlorn smile. "You ought to have thought of that. You'll be going back to India soon. And I—and I——" She stopped, still stubbornly refusing to meet the man's eyes.

"I am going back next week," Merryon said.

"How fine to be you!" said the Dragon-Fly. "You wouldn't like to take me with you now as—as *valet de chambre?*"

He raised his brows momentarily. Then: "Would you come?" he asked, with a certain roughness, as though he suspected her of trifling.

She raised her eyes suddenly, kindled and eager. "Would I come!" she said, in a tone that said more than words.

"You would?" he said, and laid an abrupt hand on her shoulder "You would, eh?"

She knelt up swiftly, the coat that enveloped her falling back, displaying the slim, boyish figure, the active, supple limbs. Her breathing came through parted lips.

"As your—your servant—your valet?" she panted.

His rough brows drew together. "My what? Good heavens, no! I could only take you in one capacity."

She started back from his hand. For a moment sheer horror looked out from her eyes. Then, almost in the same instant, they were veiled. She caught her breath, saying no word, only dumbly waiting.

"I could only take you as my wife," he said, still in that half-bantering, half-embarrassed fashion of his. "Will you come?"

She threw back her head and stared at him. "Marry you! What, really? Really?" she questioned, breathlessly.

"Merely for appearances' sake," said Merryon, with grim irony. "The regimental morals are somewhat easily offended, and an outsider like myself can't be too careful."

The girl was still staring at him, as though at some novel specimen of humanity that had never before crossed her path. Suddenly she leaned towards him, looking him full and straight in the eyes.

"What would you do if I said 'Yes'?" she questioned, in a small, tense whisper.

He looked back at her, half-interested, half amused. "Do, urchin? Why, marry you!" he said

"Really marry me?" she urged. "Not make-believe?"

He stiffened at that. "Do you know what you're saying?" he demanded, sternly.

She sprang to her feet with a wild, startled movement; then, as he remained seated, paused, looking down at him sideways, half-doubtful, half-confiding "But you can't be in earnest!" she said.

"I am in earnest." He raised his face to her with a certain doggedness, as though challenging her to detect in it aught but honesty. "I may be several kinds of a fool," he said, "but I am in earnest. I'm no great catch, but I'll marry you if you'll have me. I'll protect you, and I'll be good to you. I can't promise to make you happy, of course, but—anyway, I sha'n't make you miserable."

"But—but——" She still stood before him as though hovering on the edge of flight. Her lips were trembling, her whole form quivering and scintillating in the lamplight. She halted on the words as if uncertain how to proceed

"What is it?" said Merryon.

And then, quite suddenly, his mood softened. He leaned slowly forward.

"You needn't be afraid of me," he said. "I'm not a heady youngster. I sha'n't gobble you up."

She laughed at that—a quick, nervous laugh. "And you won't beat me either? Promise!"

He frowned at her. "Beat you! I?"

She nodded several times, faintly smiling. "Yes, you, Mr. Monster! I'm sure you could."

He smiled also, somewhat grimly. "You're wrong, madam. I couldn't beat a child."

"Oh, my!" she said, and threw up her arms with a quivering laugh, dropping his coat in a heap on the floor. "How old do you think this child is?" she questioned, glancing down at him in her sidelong, speculative fashion.

He looked at her hard and straight, looked at the slim young body in its sheath of iridescent green that shimmered with every breath she drew, and very suddenly he rose.

She made a spring backwards, but she was too late. He caught and held her.

"Let me go!" she cried, her face crimson.

"But why?" Merryon's voice fell curt and direct. He held her firmly by the shoulders

She struggled against him fiercely for a moment, then became suddenly still. "You're not a brute, are you?" she questioned, breathlessly. "You—you'll be good to me? You said so!"

He surveyed her grimly. "Yes, I will be good to you," he said. "But I'm not going to be fooled. Understand? If you marry me, you must play the part. I don't know how old you are. I don't greatly care. All I do care about is that you behave yourself as the wife of a man in my position should. You're old enough to know what that means, I suppose?"

He spoke impressively, but the effect of his

words was not quite what he expected. The point of a very red tongue came suddenly from between the red lips, and instantly disappeared.

"That all?" she said. "Oh, yes; I think I can do that. I'll try, anyway. And if you're not satisfied—well, you'll have to let me know. See? Now let me go, there's a good man! I don't like the feel of your hands."

He let her go in answer to the pleading of her eyes, and she slipped from his grasp like an eel, caught up the coat at her feet, and wriggled into it.

Then, impishly, she faced him, buttoning it with nimble fingers the while. "This is the garment of respectability," she declared. "It isn't much of a fit, is it? But I shall grow to it in time. Do you know, I believe I'm going to like being your wife?"

"Why?" said Merryon.

She laughed—that laugh of irrepressible gaiety that had surprised him before.

"Oh, just because I shall so love fighting your battles for you," she said. "It'll be grand sport."

"Think so?" said Merryon.

"Oh, you bet!" said the Dragon-Fly, with gay confidence. "Men never know how to fight. They're poor things—men!"

He himself laughed at that—his grim, grudging laugh. "It's a world of fools, Puck," he said.

"Or knaves," said the Dragon-Fly, wisely. And with that she stretched up her arms above her head and laughed again. "Now I know what it feels like," she said, "to have risen from the dead."

CHAPTER III.

COMRADES.

THERE came the flash of green wings in the cypresses and a raucous scream of jubilation as the boldest parakeet in the compound flew off with the choicest sweetmeat on the tiffin-table in the veranda. There were always sweets at tiffin in the major's bungalow. Mrs. Merryon loved sweets. She was wont to say that they were the best remedy for home-sickness she knew.

Not that she ever was home-sick. At least, no one ever suspected such a possibility, for she had a smile and a quip for all, and her laughter was the gayest in the station. She ran out now, half-dressed, from her bedroom, waving a towel at the marauder.

"That comes of being kind-hearted," she declared, in the deep voice that accorded so curiously with the frothy lightness of her personality. "Everyone takes advantage of it, sure."

Her eyes were grey and Irish, and they flashed over the scene dramatically, albeit there was no one to see and admire. For she was strangely captivating, and perhaps it was hardly to be expected that she should be quite unconscious of the fact.

"Much too taking to be good, dear," had been the verdict of the Commissioner's wife when she had first seen little Puck Merryon, the major's bride.

But then the Commissioner's wife, Mrs. Paget, was so severely plain in every way that perhaps she could scarcely be regarded as an impartial judge. She had never flirted with anyone, and could not know the joys thereof.

Young Mrs. Merryon, on the other hand, flirted quite openly and very sweetly with every man she met. It was obviously her nature so to do. She had doubtless done it from her cradle, and would probably continue the practice to her grave.

"A born wheedler," the colonel called her; but his wife thought "saucy minx" a more appropriate term, and wondered how Major Merryon could put up with her shameless trifling.

As a matter of fact, Merryon wondered himself sometimes; for she flirted with him more than all in that charming, provocative way of hers, coaxed him, laughed at him, brilliantly eluded him. She would perch daintily on the arm of his chair when he was busy, but if he so much as laid a hand upon her she was gone in a flash like a whirling insect, not to return till he was too absorbed to pay any attention to her. And often as those daring red lips mocked him, they were never offered to his even in jest. Yet was she so finished a coquette that the omission was never obvious. It seemed the most natural thing in the world that she should evade all approach to intimacy. They were comrades—just comrades.

Everyone in the station wanted to know Merryon's bride. People had begun by being distant, but that phase was long past. Puck Merryon had stormed the citadel within a fortnight of her arrival, no one quite knew how. Everyone knew her now. She went everywhere, though never without her husband, who found himself dragged into gaieties for which he had scant liking, and sought after by people who had never seemed aware of him before. She had, in short, become the rage, and so gaily did she revel in her triumph that he could not bring himself to deny her the fruits thereof.

On that particular morning in March he had gone to an early parade without seeing her, for there had been a regimental ball the night before, and she had danced every dance. Dancing seemed her one passion, and to Merryon, who did not dance, the ball had been an unmitigated weariness. He had at last, in sheer boredom, joined a party of bridge-players, with the result that he had not seen much of his young wife throughout the evening.

Returning from the parade-ground, he wondered if he would find her up, and then caught sight of her waving away the marauders in scanty attire on the veranda.

He called a greeting to her, and she instantly vanished into her room. He made his way to the table set in the shade of the cluster-roses, and sat down to await her.

She remained invisible, but her voice at once accosted him. "Good morning, Billikins!

Tell the *khit* you're ready! I shall be out in two shakes."

None but she would have dreamed of bestowing so frivolous an appellation upon the sober Merryon. But from her it came so naturally that Merryon scarcely noticed it. He had been "Billikins" to her throughout the brief three months that had elapsed since their marriage. Of course, Mrs. Paget disapproved, but then Mrs. Paget was Mrs. Paget. She disapproved of everything young and gay.

Merryon gave the required order, and then sat in solid patience to await his wife's coming. She did not keep him long. Very soon she came lightly out and joined him, an impudent smile on her sallow little face, dancing merriment in her eyes.

"Oh, poor old Billikins!" she said, commiseratingly. "You were bored last night, weren't you? I wonder if I could teach you to dance."

"I wonder," said Merryon.

His eyes dwelt upon her in her fresh white muslin. What a child she looked! Not pretty—no, not pretty; but what a magic smile she had!

She sat down at the table facing him, and leaned her elbows upon it. "I wonder if I could!" she said again, and then broke into her sudden laugh.

"What's the joke?" asked Merryon.

"Oh, nothing!" she said, recovering herself. "It suddenly came over me, that's all—poor old Mother Paget's face, supposing she had seen me last night."

"Didn't she see you last night? I thought you were more or less in the public eye," said Merryon.

"Oh, I meant after the dance," she explained. "I felt sort of wound up and excited after I got back. And I wanted to see if I could still do it. I'm glad to say I can," she ended, with another little laugh.

"Can what?" asked Merryon,

Her dark eyes shot him a tentative glance. "You'll be shocked if I tell you."

"What was it?" he said.

There was insistence in his tone—the insistence by which he had once compelled her to live against her will. Her eyelids fluttered a little as it reached her, but she cocked her small, pointed chin notwithstanding.

"Why should I tell you if I don't want to?" she demanded.

"Why shouldn't you want to?" he said.

The tip of her tongue shot out and in again. "Well, you never took me for a lady, did you?" she said, half-defiantly.

"What was it?" repeated Merryon, sticking to the point.

Again she grimaced at him, but she answered, "Oh, I only—after I'd had my bath—lay on the floor and ran round my head for a bit. It's not a bit difficult, once you've got the knack. But I got thinking of Mrs. Paget—she does amuse me, that woman. Only yesterday she asked me what Puck was short for, and I told her Elizabeth—and then I got laughing so that I had to stop."

Her face was flushed, and she was slightly breathless as she ended, but she stared across the table with brazen determination, like a naughty child expecting a slap.

Merryon's face, however, betrayed neither astonishment nor disapproval. He even smiled a little as he said, "Perhaps you would like to give me lessons in that also? I've often wondered how it was done."

She smiled back at him with instant and obvious relief.

"No, I sha'n't do it again. It's not proper. But I will teach you to dance. I'd sooner dance with you than any of 'em."

It was naively spoken, so naively that Merryon's faint smile turned into something that was almost genial. What a youngster she was! Her freshness was a perpetual source of wonder to him—when he remembered whence she had come to him.

"I am quite willing to be taught," he said. "But it must be in strict privacy."

She nodded gaily.

"Of course. You shall have a lesson to-night—when we get back from the Burtons' dinner. I'm real sorry you were bored, Billikins. You sha'n't be again."

That was her attitude always, half-maternal, half-quizzing, as if something about him amused her; yet always anxious to please him, always ready to set his wishes before her own, so long as he did not attempt to treat her seriously. She had left all that was serious in that other life that had ended with the fall of the safety-curtain on a certain night in England many æons ago. Her personality now was light as gossamer, irresponsible as thistle-down. The deeper things of life passed her by. She seemed wholly unaware of them.

"You'll be quite an accomplished dancer by the time everyone comes back from the Hills," she remarked, balancing a fork on one slender brown finger. "We'll have a ball for two—every night."

"We!" said Merryon.

She glanced at him.

"I said 'we.'"

"I know you did." The man's voice had suddenly a dogged ring; he looked across at the vivid, piquant face with the suggestion of a frown between his eyes.

"Don't do that!" she said, lightly. "Never do that, Billikins! It's most unbecoming behaviour. What's the matter?"

"The matter?" he said, slowly. "The matter is that you are going to the Hills for the hot weather with the rest of the women, Puck. I can't keep you here."

She made a rude face at him.

"Preserve me from any cattery in the Hills!" she said. "I'm going to stay with you."

"You can't," said Merryon.

"I can," she said.

He frowned still more.

"Not if I say otherwise, Puck."

She snapped her fingers at him and laughed.

"I am in earnest," Merryon said. "I can't keep you here for the hot weather. It would probably kill you."

"What of that?" she said.

He ignored her frivolity.

"It can't be done," he said. "So you must make the best of it."

"Meaning you don't want me?" she demanded, unexpectedly.

"Not for the hot weather," said Merryon.

She sprang suddenly to her feet.

"I won't go, Billikins!" she declared, fiercely. "I just won't!"

He looked at her, sternly resolute.

"You must go," he said, with unwavering decision.

"You're tired of me! Is that it?" she demanded.

He raised his brows. "You haven't given me much opportunity to be that, have you?" he said.

A great wave of colour went over her face. She put up her hand as though instinctively to shield it.

"I've done my best to—to—to——" She stopped, became piteously silent, and suddenly he saw that she was crying behind the sheltering hand.

He softened almost in spite of himself.

"Come here, Puck!" he said.

She shook her head dumbly.

"Come here!" he repeated.

She came towards him slowly, as if against her will. He reached forward, still seated, and drew her to him.

She trembled at his touch, trembled and started away, yet in the end she yielded.

"Please," she whispered; "please!"

He put his arm round her very gently, yet with determination, making her stand beside him.

"Why don't you want to go to the Hills?" he said.

"I'd be frightened," she murmured.

"Frightened? Why?"

"I don't know," she said, vaguely.

"Yes, but you do know. You must know. Tell me." He spoke gently, but the stubborn note was in his voice and his hold was insistent. "Leave off crying and tell me!"

"I'm not crying," said Puck.

She uncovered her face and looked down at him through tears with a faintly mischievous smile.

"Tell me!" he reiterated. "Is it because you don't like the idea of leaving me?"

Her smile flashed full out upon him on the instant.

"Goodness, no! Whatever made you think that?" she demanded, briskly.

He was momentarily disconcerted, but he recovered himself at once.

"Then what is your objection to going?" he asked.

She turned and sat down conversationally on the corner of the table.

"Well, you know, Billikins, it's like this. When I married you—I did it out of pity. See? I was sorry for you. You seemed such a poor, helpless sort of creature. And I thought being married to me might help to improve your position a bit. You see my point, Billikins?"

"Oh, quite," he said. "Please go on!"

She went on, with butterfly gaiety.

"I worked hard—really hard—to get you out of your bog. It was a horrid deep one, wasn't it, Billikins? My! You were floundering! But I've pulled you out of it and dragged you up the bank a bit. You don't get sniffed at anything like you used, do you, Billikins? But I daren't leave you yet. I honestly daren't. You'd slip right back again directly my back was turned. And I should have the pleasure of starting the business all over again. I couldn't face it, my dear. It would be too disheartening."

"I see," said Merryon. There was just the suspicion of a smile among the rugged lines of his face. "Yes, I see your point. But I can show you another if you'll listen."

He was holding her two hands as she sat, as though he feared an attempt to escape. For though Puck sat quite still, it was with the stillness of a trapped creature that waits upon opportunity.

"Will you listen?" he said.

She nodded.

It was not an encouraging nod, but he proceeded.

"All the women go to the Hills for the hot weather. It's unspeakable here. No white woman could stand it. And we men get leave by turns to join them. There is nothing doing down here, no social round whatever. It's just stark duty. I can't lose much social status that way. It will serve my turn much better if you go up with the other women and continue to hold your own there. Not that I care a rap," he added, with masculine tactlessness. "I am no longer susceptible to snubs."

"Then I sha'n't go," she said at once, beginning to swing a restless foot.

"Yes, but you will go," he said. "I wish it."

"You want to get rid of me," said Puck, looking over his head with the eyes of a troubled child.

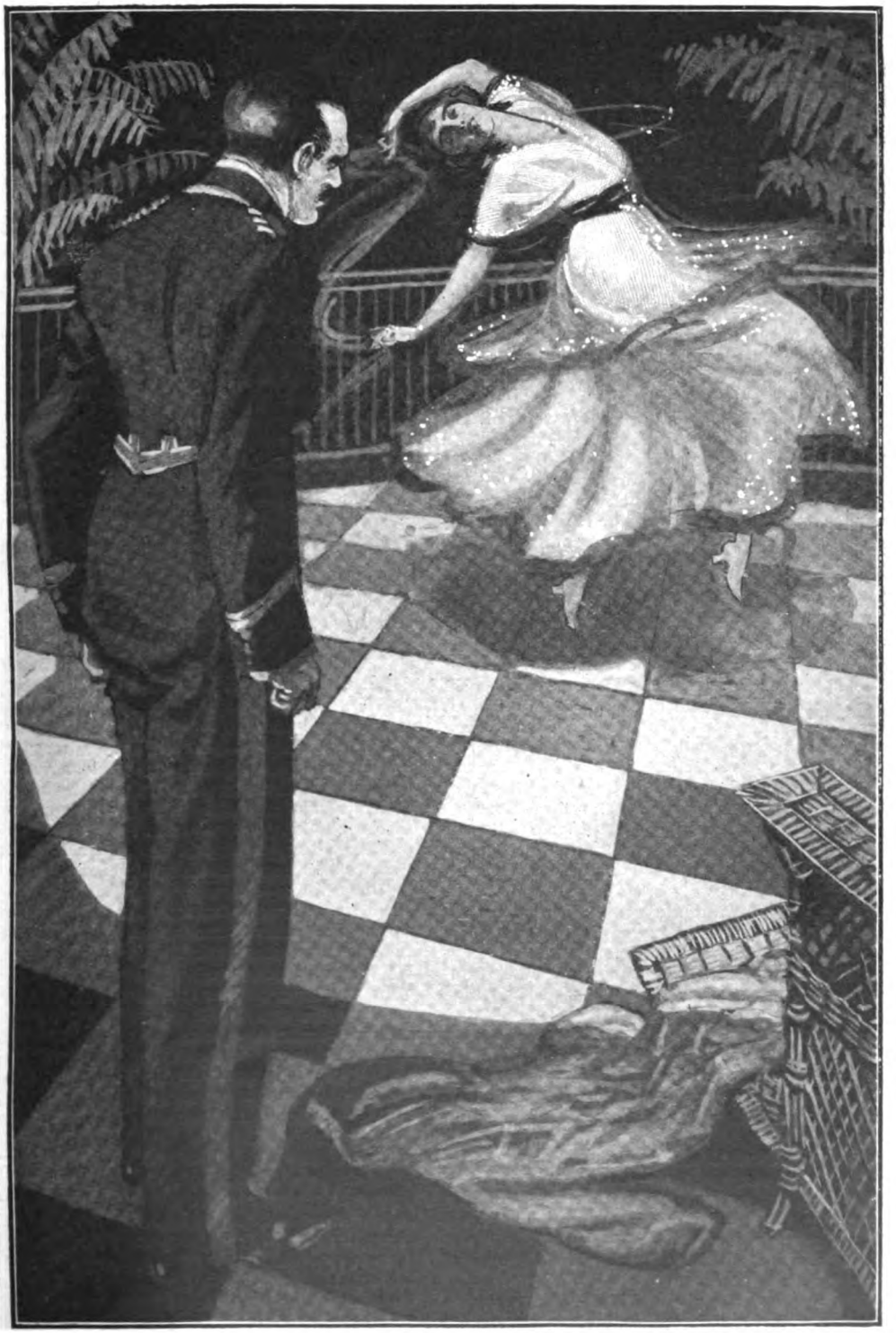
Merryon was silent. He was watching her with a kind of speculative curiosity. His hands were still locked upon hers.

Slowly her eyes came down to his.

"Billikins," she said, "let me stay down for a little!" Her lips were quivering. She kicked his chair agitatedly. "I don't want to go," she said, dismally. "Let me stay—anyhow—till I get ill!"

"No," Merryon said. "It can't be done, child. I can't risk that. Besides, there'd be no one to look after you."

She slipped to her feet in a flare of indignation. "You're a pig, Billikins! You're a pig!" she cried, and tore her hands free. "I've a good mind to run away from you and never come back. It's what you deserve, and what you'll get, if you aren't careful!"



"SHE WAS LIKE A MOCKING SPIRIT, A WILL-O'-THE-WISP, LURING HIM, LURING HIM — WHITHER?"

She was gone with the words—gone like a flashing insect disturbing the silence for a moment, and leaving a deeper silence behind.

Merryon looked after her for a second or two, and then philosophically continued his meal. But the slight frown remained between his brows. The veranda seemed empty and colourless now that she was gone.

CHAPTER IV.

FRIENDS.

THE Burtons' dinner-party was a very cheerful affair. The Burtons were young and newly-married, and they liked to gather round them all the youth and gaiety of the station. It was for that reason that Puck's presence had been secured, for she was the life of every gathering; and her husband had been included in the invitation simply and solely because from the very outset she had refused to go anywhere without him. It was the only item of her behaviour of which worthy Mrs. Paget could conscientiously approve.

As a matter of fact, Merryon had not the smallest desire to go, but he would not say so; and all through the evening he sat and watched his young wife with a curious hunger at his heart. He hated to think that he had hurt her.

There was no sign of depression about Puck, however, and he alone noticed that she never once glanced in his direction. She kept everyone up to a pitch of frivolity that certainly none would have attained without her, and an odd feeling began to stir in Merryon, a sensation of jealousy such as he had never before experienced. They seemed to forget, all of them, that this flashing, brilliant creature was his.

She seemed to have forgotten it also. Or was it only that deep-seated, inimitable coquetry of hers that prompted her thus to ignore him?

He could not decide; but throughout the evening the determination grew in him to make this one point clear to her. Trifle as she might, she must be made to understand that she belonged to him, and him alone. Comrades they might be, but he held a vested right in her, whether he chose to assert it or not.

They returned at length to their little gimcrack bungalow—the Match-box, as Puck called it—on foot under a blaze of stars. The distance was not great, and Puck despised rickshaws.

She flitted by his side in her airy way, chatting inconsequently, not troubling about response, as elusive as a fairy and—the man felt it in the rising fever of his veins—as maddeningly attractive.

They reached the bungalow. She went up the steps to the rose-twined veranda as though she floated on wings of gossamer. "The roses are all asleep, Billikins," she said. "They look like alabaster, don't they?"

She caught a cluster to her and held it against her cheek for a moment.

Merryon was close behind her. She seemed to realize his nearness quite suddenly, for she let the flowers go abruptly and flitted on.

He followed her till, at the farther end of the veranda, she turned and faced him. "Good night, Billikins," she said, lightly.

"What about that dancing-lesson?" he said.

She threw up her arms above her head with a curious gesture. They gleamed transparently white in the starlight. Her eyes shone like fireflies.

"I thought you preferred dancing by yourself," she retorted.

"Why?" he said.

She laughed a soft, provocative laugh, and suddenly, without any warning, the cloak had fallen from her shoulders and she was dancing. There in the starlight, white-robed and wonderful, she danced as, it seemed to the man's fascinated senses, no human had ever danced before. She was like a white flame—a darting, fiery essence, soundless, all-absorbing, all-entrancing.

He watched her with pent breath, bound by the magic of her, caught, as it were, into the innermost circle of her being, burning in answer to her fire, yet so curiously enthralled as to be scarcely aware of the ever-mounting, ever-spreading heat. She was like a mocking spirit, a will-o'-the-wisp, luring him, luring him—whither?

The dance quickened, became a passionate whirl, so that suddenly he seemed to see a bright-winged insect caught in an endless web and battling for freedom. He almost saw the silvery strands of that web floating like gossamer in the starlight.

And then, with well-nigh miraculous suddenness, the struggle was over and the insect had darted free. He saw her flash away, and found the veranda empty.

Her cloak lay at his feet. He stooped with an odd sense of giddiness and picked it up. A fragrance of roses came to him with the touch of it, and for an instant he caught it up to his face. The sweetness seemed to intoxicate him.

There came a light, inconsequent laugh; sharply he turned. She had opened the window of his smoking-den and was standing in the entrance with impudent merriment in her eyes. There was triumph also in her pose—a triumph that sent a swirl of hot passion through him. He flung aside the cloak and strode towards her.

But she was gone on the instant, gone with a tinkle of maddening laughter. He blundered into the darkness of an empty room. But he was not the man to suffer defeat tamely. Momentarily baffled, he paused to light a lamp; then went from room to room of the little bungalow, locking each door that she might not elude him a second time. His blood was on fire, and he meant to find her.

In the end he came upon her wholly unexpectedly, standing on the veranda amongst the twining roses. She seemed to be awaiting him, though she made no movement towards him as he approached.

"Good night, Billikins," she said, her voice very small and humble.

He came to her without haste, realizing that she had given the game into his hands. She did not shrink from him, but she raised an appealing

face. And oddly the man's heart smote him. She looked so pathetically small and childish, standing there.

But the blood was still running fiercely in his veins, and that momentary twinge did not cool him. Child she might be, but she had played with fire, and she alone was responsible for the conflagration that she had started.

He drew near to her; he took her, unresisting, into his arms.

"I see." Merryon's voice was deep and low. "And you meantime are at liberty to play any fool game you like with me. Is that it?"

She was quivering from head to foot. She did not lift her face. "It wasn't—a fool game," she protested. "I did it because—because—you were so horrid this morning, so—so cold-blooded. And I—and I—wanted to see if—I could make you care."

"Make me care!" Merryon said the words

"I—I WANTED TO SEE IF I COULD MAKE YOU CARE."

She cowered down, hiding her face away from him. "Don't, Billikins! Please—please, Billikins!" she begged, incoherently. "You promised—you promised——"

"What did I promise?" he said.

"That you wouldn't—wouldn't"—she spoke breathlessly, for his hold was tightening upon her—"gobble me up," she ended, with a painful little laugh.

over oddly to himself; and then, still fast holding her, he began to feel for the face that was so strenuously hidden from him.

She resisted him desperately. "Let me go!" she begged, piteously. "I'll be so good, Billikins. I'll go to the Hills. I'll do anything you like. Only let me go now! Billikins!"

She cried out sharply, for he had overcome

her resistance by quiet force, had turned her white face up to his own.

"I am not cold-blooded to-night, Puck," he said. "Whatever you are—child or woman—gutter-snipe or angel—you are mine, all mine. And—I want you!"

The deep note vibrated in his voice; he stooped over her.

But she flung herself back over his arm, striving desperately to avoid him. "No—no—no!" she cried, wildly. "You mustn't, Billikins! Don't kiss me! Don't kiss me!"

She threw up a desperate hand, covering his mouth. "Don't—oh, don't!" she entreated, brokenly.

But the fire she had kindled she was powerless to quench. He would not be frustrated. He caught her hand away. He held her to his heart. He kissed the red lips hotly, with the savage freedom of a nature long restrained.

"Who has a greater right?" he said, with fiery exultation.

She did not answer him. But at the first touch of his lips upon her own she resisted no longer, only broke into agonized tears.

And suddenly Merryon came to himself—was furiously, overwhelmingly ashamed.

"God forgive me!" he said, and let her go.

She tottered a little, covering her face with her hands, sobbing like a hurt child. But she did not try to run away.

He flung round upon his heel and paced the veranda in fierce discomfort. Beast that he was—brute beast to have hurt her so! That piteous sobbing was more than he could bear.

Suddenly he turned back to her, came and stood beside her. "Puck—Puck, child!" he said.

His voice was soft and very urgent. He touched the bent, dark head with a hesitating caress.

She started away from him with a gasp of dismay; but he checked her.

"No, don't!" he said. "It's all right, dear. I'm not such a brute as I seem. Don't be afraid of me!"

There was more of pleading in his voice than he knew. She raised her head suddenly, and looked at him as if puzzled.

He pulled out his handkerchief and dabbed her wet cheeks with clumsy tenderness. "It's all right," he said again. "Don't cry! I hate to see you cry."

She gazed at him, still doubtful, still sobbing a little. "Oh, Billikins!" she said, tremulously, "why did you?"

"I don't know," he said. "I was mad. It was your own fault, in a way. You don't seem to realize that I'm as human as the rest of the world. But I don't defend myself. I was an infernal brute to let myself go like that."

"Oh, no, you weren't, Billikins!" Quite unexpectedly she answered him. "You couldn't help it. Men are like that. And I'm glad you're human. But—but"—she faltered a little—"I want to feel that you're safe, too. I've always felt—ever since I jumped into your arms that night—that you—that you were on the right side of the safety-curtain. You are, aren't you? Oh, please say you are! But I know you are." She held out her hands to him with a quivering gesture of confidence. "If you'll forgive me for—for fooling you," she said, "I'll forgive you—for being fooled. That's a fair offer, isn't it? Don't let's think any more about it!" Her rainbow smile transformed her face, but her eyes sought his anxiously.

He took the hands, but he did not attempt to draw her nearer. "Puck!" he said.

"What is it?" she whispered, trembling.

"Don't!" he said. "I won't hurt you. I wouldn't hurt a hair of your head. But, child, wouldn't it be safer—easier for both of us—if—if we lived together, instead of apart?"

He spoke almost under his breath. There was no hint of mastery about him at that moment, only a gentleness that pleaded with her as with a frightened child.

And Puck went nearer to him on the instant, as it were instinctively, almost involuntarily. "P'r'aps some day, Billikins!" she said, with a little, quivering laugh. "But not yet—not if I've got to go to the Hills away from you."

"When I follow you to the Hills, then," he said.

She freed one hand and, reaching up, lightly stroked his cheek. "P'r'aps, Billikins!" she said again. "But—you'll have to be awfully patient with me, because—because——" She paused, agitatedly; then went yet a little nearer to him. "You will be kind to me, won't you?" she pleaded.

He put his arm about her. "Always, dear," he said.

She raised her face. She was still trembling, but her action was one of resolute confidence. "Then let's be friends, Billikins!" she said.

It was a tacit invitation. He bent and gravely kissed her.

Her lips returned his kiss shyly, quiveringly. "You're the nicest man I ever met, Billikins," she said. "Good night!"

She slipped from his encircling arm and was gone.

The man stood motionless where she had left him, wondering at himself, at her, at the whole rocking universe. She had kindled the Magic Fire in him indeed! His whole being was aglow. And yet—and yet—she had had her way with him. He had let her go.

Wherefore? Wherefore? The hot blood dinned in his ears. His hands clenched. And from very deep within him the answer came. Because he loved her.

CHAPTER V.

THE WOMAN.

SUMMER in the Plains! Pitiless, burning summer!

All day a blinding blaze of sun beat upon the wooden roof, forced a way through the shaded windows, lay like a blasting spell upon the parched compound. The cluster-roses had

shrivelled and died long since. Their brown leaves still clung to the veranda and rattled desolately with a dry, scaly sound in the burning wind of dawn.

The green parakeets had ceased to look for sweets on the veranda. Nothing dainty ever made its appearance there. The Englishman who came and went with such grim endurance offered them no temptations.

Sometimes he spent the night on a *charpoy* on the veranda, lying motionless, though often sleepless, through the breathless, dragging hours. There had been sickness among the officers, and Merryon, who was never sick, was doing the work of three men. He did it doggedly, with the stubborn determination characteristic of him; not cheerfully—no one ever accused Merryon of being cheerful—but efficiently and uncomplainingly. Other men cursed the heat, but he never took the trouble. He needed all his energies for what he had to do.

His own chance of leave had become very remote. There was so much sick leave that he could not be spared. Over that, also, he made no complaint. It was useless to grumble at the inevitable. There was not a man in the mess who could not be spared more easily than he.

For he was indomitable, unfailing, always fulfilling his duties with machine-like regularity, stern, impenetrable, hard as granite.

As to what lay behind that hardness, no one ever troubled to inquire. They took him for granted, much as if he had been a well-oiled engine guaranteed to surmount all obstacles. How he did it was nobody's business but his own. If he suffered in that appalling heat as other men suffered, no one knew of it. If he grew a little grimmer and a little gaunter, no one noticed. Everyone knew that whatever happened to others, he at least would hold on. Everyone described him as "hard as nails."

Each day seemed more intolerable than the last, each night a perceptible narrowing of the fiery circle in which they lived. They seemed to be drawing towards a culminating horror that grew hourly more palpable, more monstrously menacing—a horror that drained their strength even from afar.

"It's going to kill us this time," declared little Robey, the youngest subaltern, to whom the nights were a torment unspeakable. He had been within an ace of heat apoplexy more than once, and his nerves were stretched almost to breaking-point.

But Merryon went doggedly on, hewing his unswerving way through all. The monsoon was drawing near, and the whole tortured earth seemed to be waiting in dumb expectation.

Night after night a glassy moon came up, shining, immense and awful, through a thick haze of heat. Night after night Merryon lay on his veranda, smoking his pipe in stark endurance while the dreadful hours crept by. Sometimes he held a letter from his wife hard clenched in one powerful hand. She wrote to him frequently—short, airy epistles, wholly inconsequent, often provocatively meagre.

"There is a Captain Silvester here," she wrote once; "such a bounder. But he is literally the only man who can dance in the station. So what would you? Poor Mrs. Paget is so shocked!"

Feathery hints of this description were by no means unusual, but though Merryon sometimes frowned over them, they did not make him uneasy. His will-o'-the-wisp might beckon, but she would never allow herself to be caught. She never spoke of love in her letters, always ending demurely, "Yours sincerely, Puck." But now and then there was a small cross scratched impulsively underneath the name, and the letters that bore this token accompanied Merryon through his inferno whithersoever he went.

There came at last a night of terrible heat, when it seemed as if the world itself must burst into flames. A heavy storm rolled up, roared overhead for a space like a caged monster, and sullenly rolled away, without a single drop of rain to ease the awful tension of waiting that possessed all things.

Merryon left the mess early, tramping back over the dusty road, convinced that the downpour for which they all yearned was at hand. There was no moonlight that night, only a hot blackness, illumined now and then by a brilliant dart of lightning that shocked the senses and left behind a void indescribable, a darkness that could be felt. There was something savage in the atmosphere, something primitive and passionate that seemed to force itself upon him even against his will. His pulses were strung to a tropical intensity that made him aware of the man's blood in him, racing at fever heat through veins that felt swollen to bursting.

He entered his bungalow and flung off his clothes, took a plunge in a bath of tepid water, from which he emerged with a pricking sensation all over him that made the lightest touch a torture, and finally, keyed up to a pitch of sensitiveness that excited his own contempt, he pulled on some pyjamas and went out to his *charpoy* on the veranda.

He dismissed the *punkah* coolie, feeling his presence to be intolerable, and threw himself down with his coat flung open. The oppression of the atmosphere was as though a red-hot lid were being forced down upon the tortured earth. The blackness beyond the veranda was like a solid wall. Sleep was out of the question. He could not smoke. It was an effort even to breathe. He could only lie in torment and wait—and wait.

The flashes of lightning had become less frequent. A kind of waking dream began to move in his brain. A figure gradually grew upon that screen of darkness—an elf-like thing, intangible, transparent, a quivering, shadowy image, remote as the dawn.

Wide-eyed, he watched the vision, his pulses beating with a mad longing so fierce as to be

utterly beyond his own control. It was as though he had drunk strong wine and had somehow slipped the leash of ordinary convention. The savagery of the night, the tropical intensity of it, had got into him. Half-naked, wholly primitive, he lay and waited —and waited.

For awhile the vision hung before him, tantalizing him, maddening him, eluding him. Then came a flash of lightning, and it was gone.

He started up on the *charpoy*, every nerve tense as stretched wire.

"Come back!" he cried, hoarsely. "Come back!"

Again the lightning streaked the darkness. There came a burst of thunder, and suddenly, through it and above it, he heard the far-distant roar of rain. He sprang to his feet. It was coming.

The seconds throbbed away. Something was moving in the compound, a subtle, awful Something. The trees and bushes quivered before it, the cluster-roses rattled their dead leaves wildly. But the man stood motionless in the light that fell across the veranda from the open window of his room, watching with eyes that shone with a fierce and glaring intensity for the return of his vision.

The fevered blood was hammering at his temples. For the moment he was scarcely sane. The fearful strain of the past few weeks that had overwhelmed less hardy men had wrought upon him in a fashion more subtle but none the less compelling. They had been stricken down, whereas he had been strung to a pitch where bodily suffering had almost ceased to count. He had grown used to the torment, and now in this supreme moment it tore from him his civilization, but his physical strength remained untouched. He stood alert and ready, like a beast in a cage, waiting for whatever the gods might deign to throw him.

The tumult beyond that wall of blackness grew. It became a swirling uproar. The rose-vines were whipped from the veranda and flung writhing in all directions. The trees in the compound strove like terrified creatures in the grip of a giant. The heat of the blast was like tongues of flame blown from an immense furnace. Merryon's whole body seemed to be wrapped in fire. With a fierce movement he stripped the coat from him and flung it into the room behind him. He was alone, save for the devils that raged in that pandemonium. What did it matter how he met them?

And then, with the suddenness of a stupendous weight dropped from heaven, came rain, rain in torrents and billows, rain solid as the volume of Niagara, a crushing, mighty force.

The tempest shrieked through the compound. The lightning glimmered, leapt, became continuous. The night was an inferno of thunder and violence.

And suddenly out of the inferno, out of the awful strife of elements, out of that frightful rainfall, there came—a woman!

CHAPTER VI.

LOVERS.

SHE came haltingly, clinging with both hands to the rail of the veranda, her white face staring upwards in terror and instinctive appeal. She was like an insect dragging itself away from destruction, with drenched and battered wings.

He saw her coming and stiffened. It was his vision returned to him, but till she came within reach of him he was afraid to move. He stood upright against the wall, every mad instinct of his blood fiercely awake and clamouring.

The noise and wind increased. It swirled along the veranda. She seemed afraid to quit her hold of the balustrade lest she should be swept away. But still she drew nearer to the lighted window, and at last, with desperate resolution, she tore herself free and sprang for shelter.

In that instant the man also sprang. He caught her in arms that almost expected to clasp emptiness, arms that crushed in a savage ecstasy of possession at the actual contact with a creature of flesh and blood. In the same moment the lamp in the room behind him flared up and went out.

There arose a frightened crying from his breast. For a few moments she fought like a mad thing for freedom. He felt her teeth set in his arm, and laughed aloud. Then very suddenly her struggles ceased. He became aware of a change in her. She gave her whole weight into his arms, and lay palpitating against his heart.

By the awful glare of the lightning he found her face uplifted to his. She was laughing, too, but in her eyes was such a passion of love as he had never looked upon before. In that moment he knew that she was his—wholly, completely, irrevocably his. And, stooping, he kissed the upturned lips with the fierce exultation of the conqueror.

Her arms slipped round his neck. She abandoned herself wholly to him. She gave him worship for worship, passion for passion.

Later, he awoke to the fact that she was drenched from head to foot. He drew her into his room and shut the window against the driving blast. She clung to him still.

"Isn't it dreadful?" she said, shuddering. "It's just as if Something Big is trying to get between us."

He closed the shutter also, and groped for matches. She accompanied him on his search, for she would not lose touch with him for a moment.

The lamp flared on her white, childish face, showing him wild joy and horror strangely mingled. Her great eyes laughed up at him.

"Billikins, darling! You aren't very decent, are you? I'm not decent either, Billikins. I'd like to take off all my clothes and dance on my head."

He laughed grimly. "You will certainly have to undress the sooner the better."

She spread out her hands. "But I've nothing to wear, Billikins, nothing but what I've got on. I didn't know it was going to rain so.

"IN THAT INSTANT THE MAN ALSO SPRANG."

You'll have to lend me a suit of pyjamas, dear, while I get my things dried. You see"—she halted a little—"I came away in rather a hurry. I—was bored."

Merryon, oddly sobered by her utter dependence upon him, turned aside and foraged for brandy. She came close to him while he poured it out.

"It isn't for me, is it? I couldn't drink it, darling. I shouldn't know what was happening for the next twenty-four hours if I did."

"It doesn't matter whether you do or not," he said. "I shall be here to look after you."

She laughed at that, a little quivering laugh of sheer content. Her cheek was against his shoulder. "Live for ever, O king!" she said, and softly kissed it.

Then she caught sight of something on the arm below. "Oh, darling, did I do that?" she cried, in distress.

He put the arm about her. "It doesn't matter. I don't feel it," he said. "I've got you."

She lifted her lips to his again. "Billikins, darling, I didn't know it was you—at first, not till I heard you laugh. I'd rather die than hurt you. You know it, don't you?"

"Of course I know it," he said.

He caught her to him passionately for a moment, then slowly relaxed his hold. "Drink this, like a good child," he said, "and then you must get to bed. You are wet to the skin."

"I know I am," she said, "but I don't mind."

"I mind for you," he said.

She laughed up at him, her eyes like stars. "I was lucky to get in when I did," she said. "Wasn't the heat dreadful—and the lightning? I ran all the way from the station. I was just terrified at it all. But I kept thinking of you, dear—of you, and how—and how you'd kissed me that night when I was such a little idiot as to cry. Must I really drink it, Billikins? Ah, well, just to please you—anything to please you. But you must have one little sip first. Yes, darling, just one. That's to please your silly little wife, who wants to share everything with you now. There's my own boy! Now I'll drink every drop—every drop."

She began to drink, standing in the circle of his arm; then looked up at him with a quick grimace. "It's powerful strong, dear. You'll have to put me to bed double quick after this, or I shall be standing on my head in earnest."

He laughed a little. She leaned back against him.

"Yes, I know, darling. You're a man that likes to manage, aren't you? Well, you can manage me and all that is mine for the rest of my natural life. I'm never going to leave you again, Billikins. That's understood, is it?"

His face sobered. "What possessed you to come back to this damnable place?" he said.

She laughed against his shoulder. "Now, Billikins, don't you start asking silly questions. I'll tell you as much as it's good for you to know all in good time. I came mainly because I wanted to. And that's the reason why I'm going to stay. See?"

She reached up an audacious finger and smoothed the faint frown from his forehead with her sunny, provocative smile.

"It'll have to be a joint management," she said. "There are so many things you mustn't do. Now, darling, I've finished the brandy to please you. So suppose you look out your prettiest suit of pyjamas, and I'll try and get into them." She broke into a giddy little laugh. "What would Mrs. Paget say? Can't you see her face? I can!"

She stopped suddenly, struck dumb by a terrible blast of wind that shook the bungalow to its foundations.

"Just hark to the wind and the rain, Billikins!" she whispered, as it swirled on. "Did you ever hear anything so awful? It's as if—as if God were very furious—about something. Do you think He is, dear? Do you?" She pressed close to him with white, pleading face upraised. "Do you believe in God, Billikins? Honestly now!"

The man hesitated, holding her fast in his arms, seeing only the quivering, childish mouth and beseeching eyes.

"You don't, do you?" she said. "I don't myself, Billikins. I think He's just a myth. Or anyhow—if He's there at all—He doesn't bother about the people who were born on the wrong side of the safety-curtain. There, darling! Kiss me once more—I love your kisses—I love them! And now go! Yes—yes, you must go—just while I make myself respectable. Yes, but you can leave the door ajar, dear heart! I want to feel you close at hand. I am yours—till I die—king and master!"

Her eyes were brimming with tears; he thought her overwrought and weary, and passed them by in silence.

And so through that night of wonder, of violence and of storm, she lay against his heart, her arms wound about his neck with a closeness which even sleep could not relax.

Out of the storm she had come to him, like a driven bird seeking refuge; and through the fury of the storm he held her, compassing her with the fire of his passion.

"I am safe now," she murmured once, when he thought her sleeping. "I am quite—quite safe."

And he, fancying the raging of the storm had disturbed her, made hushing answer, "Quite safe, wife of my heart."

She trembled a little, and nestled closer to his breast.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HONEYMOON.

"You can't mean to let your wife stay here!" ejaculated the colonel, sharply. "You wouldn't do anything so mad!"

Merryon's hard mouth took a sterner downward curve. "My wife refuses to leave me, sir," he said.

"Good heavens above, Merryon!" The colonel's voice held a species of irritated derision,

"Do you tell me you can't manage—a—a piece of thistle-down like that?"

Merryon was silent, grimly, implacably silent. Plainly he had no intention of making such an admission.

"It's madness—criminal madness!" Colonel Davenant looked at him aggressively, obviously longing to pierce that stubborn calm with which Merryon had so long withstood the world.

But Merryon remained unmoved, though deep in his private soul he knew that the colonel was right, knew that he had decided upon a course of action that involved a risk which he dreaded to contemplate.

"Oh, look here, Merryon!" The colonel lost his temper after his own precipitate fashion. "Don't be such a confounded fool! Take a fortnight's leave—I can't spare you longer—and go back to the Hills with her! Make her settle down with my wife at Shamkura! Tell her you'll beat her if she doesn't!"

Merryon's grim face softened a little. "Thank you very much, sir! But you can't spare me even for so long. Moreover, that form of punishment wouldn't scare her. So, you see, it would come to the same thing in the end. She is determined to face what I face for the present."

"And you're determined to let her!" growled the colonel.

Merryon shrugged his shoulders.

"You'll probably lose her," the colonel persisted, gnawing fiercely at his moustache. "Have you considered that?"

"I've considered everything," Merryon said, rather heavily. "But she came to me—through that inferno. I can't send her away again. She wouldn't go."

Colonel Davenant swore under his breath. "Let me talk to her!" he said, after a moment.

The ghost of a smile touched Merryon's face. "It's no good, sir. You can talk. You won't make any impression."

"But it's practically a matter of life and death, man!" insisted the colonel. "You can't afford any silly sentiment in an affair like this."

"I am not sentimental," Merryon said, and his lips twitched a little with the words. "But all the same, since she has set her heart on staying, she shall stay. I have promised that she shall."

"You are mad," the colonel declared. "Just think a minute! Think what your feelings will be if she dies!"

"I have thought, sir." The dogged note was in Merryon's voice again. His face was a mask of impenetrability. "If she dies, I shall at least have the satisfaction of knowing that I made her happy first."

It was his last word on the subject. He departed, leaving the colonel fuming.

That evening the latter called upon Mrs. Merryon. He found her sitting on her husband's knee smoking a Turkish cigarette, and though she abandoned this unconventional attitude to receive her visitor, he had a distinct impression that the two were in subtle communion throughout his stay.

"It's so very nice of you to take the trouble," she said, in her charming way, when he had made his most urgent representations. "But really it's much better for me to be with my husband here. I stayed at Shamkura just as long as I could possibly bear it, and then I just had to come back here. I don't think I shall get ill—really. And if I do"—she made a little foreign gesture of the hands—"I'll nurse myself."

As Merryon had foretold, it was useless to argue with her. She dismissed all argument with airy unreason But yet the colonel could not find it in his heart to be angry with her. He was very angry with Merryon, so angry that for a whole fortnight he scarcely spoke to him.

But when the end of the fortnight came, and with it the first break in the rains, little Mrs. Merryon went smiling forth and returned his call.

"Are you still being cross with Billikins?" she asked him, while her hand lay engagingly in his. "Because it's really not his fault, you know. If he sent me to Kamschatka, I should still come back."

"You wouldn't if you belonged to me," said Colonel Davenant, with a grudging smile.

She laughed and shook her head. "Perhaps I shouldn't—not unless I loved you as dearly as I love Billikins. But I think you needn't be cross about it. I'm quite well. If you don't believe me, you can look at my tongue."

She shot it out impudently, still laughing. And the colonel suddenly and paternally patted her cheek.

"You're a very naughty girl," he said. "But I suppose we shall have to make the best of you. Only, for Heaven's sake, don't go and get ill on the quiet! If you begin to feel queer, send for the doctor at the outset!"

He abandoned his attitude of disapproval towards Merryon after that interview, realizing possibly its injustice. He even declared in a letter to his wife that Mrs. Merryon was an engaging chit, with a will of her own that threatened to rule them all! Mrs. Davenant pursed her lips somewhat over the assertion, and remarked that Major Merryon's wife was plainly more at home with men than women. Captain Silvester was so openly out of temper over her absence that it was evident she had been "leading him on with utter heartlessness," and now, it seemed, she meant to have the whole mess at her beck and call.

As a matter of fact, Puck saw much more of the mess than she desired. It became the fashion among the younger officers to drop into the Merryons' bungalow at the end of the evening. Amusements were scarce, and Puck was a vigorous antidote to boredom. She always sparkled in society, and she was too sweet-natured to snub "the boys," as she called them. The smile of welcome was ever ready on her little, thin white face, the quick jest on her nimble tongue.

"We mustn't be piggy just because we are

"SHE WAS VERY DOCILE, PUNCTUATING HIS REMARKS WITH SOFT KISSES DROPPED INCONSEQUENTLY ON THE TOP OF HIS HEAD."

happy," she said to her husband once. "How are they to know we are having our honeymoon?" And then she nestled close to him, whispering, "It's quite the best honeymoon any woman ever had."

To which he could make but the one reply, pressing her to his heart and kissing the red lips that mocked so merrily when the world was looking on.

She had become the hub of his existence, and day by day he watched her anxiously, grasping his happiness with a feeling that it was too great to last.

The rains set in in earnest, and the reek of the Plains rose like an evil miasma to the turbid heavens. The atmosphere was as the interior of a steaming cauldron. Great toadstools spread like a loathsome disease over the compound. Fever was rife in the camp. Mosquitoes buzzed incessantly everywhere, and rats began to take refuge in the bungalow. Puck was privately terrified at rats, but she smothered her terror in her husband's presence and maintained a smiling front. They laid down poison for the rats, who died horribly in inaccessible places, making her wonder if they were not almost preferable alive. And then one night she discovered a small snake coiled in a corner of her bedroom.

She fled to Merryon in horror, and he and the *khitmutgar* slew the creature. But Puck's nerves were on edge from that day forward. She went through agonies of cold fear whenever she was left alone, and she feverishly encouraged the subalterns to visit her during her husband's absence on duty.

He raised no objection till he one day returned unexpectedly to find her dancing a hornpipe for the benefit of a small, admiring crowd to whom she had been administering tea.

She sprang like a child to meet him at hi

entrance, declaring the entertainment at an end; and the crowd soon melted away.

Then, somewhat grimly, Merryon took his wife to task.

She sat on the arm of his chair with her arms round his neck, swinging one leg while she listened. She was very docile, punctuating his remarks with soft kisses dropped inconsequently on the top of his head. When he ended, she slipped cosily down upon his knee and promised to be good.

It was not a very serious promise, and it was plainly proffered in a spirit of propitiation. Merryon pursued the matter no further, but he was vaguely dissatisfied. He had a feeling that she regarded his objections as the outcome of eccentric prudishness, or at the best an unreasonable fit of jealousy. She smoothed him down as though he had been a spoilt child, her own attitude supremely unabashed; and though he could not be angry with her, an uneasy sense of doubt pressed upon him. Utterly his own as he knew her to be, yet dimly, intangibly, he began to wonder what her outlook on life could be, how she regarded the tie that bound them. It was impossible to reason seriously with her. She floated out of his reach at the first touch.

So that curious honeymoon of theirs continued, love and passion crudely mingled, union without knowledge, flaming worship and blind possession.

"You are happy?" Merryon asked her once.

To which she made ardent answer, "Always happy in your arms, O king."

And Merryon was happy also, though, looking back later, it seemed to him that he snatched his happiness on the very edge of the pit, and that even at the time he must have been half-aware of it.

When, a month after her coming, the scourge of the Plains caught her, as was inevitable, he felt as if his new-found kingdom had begun already to depart from him.

For a few days Puck was seriously ill with malaria. She came through it with marvellous resolution, nursed by Merryon and his bearer, the general factotum of the establishment.

But it left her painfully weak and thin, and the colonel became again furiously insistent that she should leave the Plains till the rains were over.

Merryon, curiously enough, did not insist. Only one evening he took the little wasted body into his arms and begged her—actually begged her—to consent to go.

"I shall be with you for the first fortnight," he said. "It won't be more than a six-weeks' separation."

"Six weeks!" she protested, piteously.

"Perhaps less," he said. "I may be able to come to you for a day or two in the middle. Say you will go—and stay, sweetheart! Set my mind at rest!"

"But, darling, you may be ill. A thousand things may happen. And I couldn't go back to Shamkura. I couldn't!" said Puck, almost crying, clinging fast around his neck.

"But why not?" he questioned, gently. "Weren't they kind to you there? Weren't you happy?"

She clung faster. "Happy, Billikins! With that hateful Captain Silvester lying in wait to—to make love to me! I didn't tell you before. But that—that was why I left."

He frowned above her head. "You ought to have told me before, Puck."

She trembled in his arms. "It didn't seem to matter when once I'd got away; and I knew it would only make you cross."

"How did he make love to you?" demanded Merryon.

He tried to see her face, but she hid it resolutely against him. "Don't, Billikins! It doesn't matter now."

"It does matter," he said, sternly.

Puck was silent.

Merryon continued inexorably. "I suppose it was your own fault. You led him on."

She gave a little nervous laugh against his breast. "I never meant to, Billikins. I—I don't much like men—as a rule."

"You manage to conceal that fact very successfully," he said.

She laughed again rather piteously. "You don't know me," she whispered. "I'm not—like that—all through."

"I hope not," said Merryon, severely.

She turned her face slightly upwards and snuggled it into his neck. "You used not to mind," she said.

He held her close in his arms the while he steeled himself against her. "Well, I mind now," he said. "And I will have no more of it. Is that clearly understood?"

She assented dubiously, her lips softly kissing his neck. "It isn't—all my fault, Billikins," she whispered, wistfully, "that men treat me—lightly."

He set his teeth. "It must be your fault," he declared, firmly. "You can help it if you try."

She turned her face more fully to his. "How grim you look, darling! You haven't kissed me for quite five minutes."

"I feel more like whipping you," he said, grimly.

She leapt in his arms as if he had been about to put his words into action. "Oh, no!" she cried. "No, you wouldn't beat me, Billikins. You—you wouldn't, dear, would you?" Her great eyes, dilated and imploring, gazed into his for a long desperate second ere she gave herself back to him with a sobbing laugh. "You're not in earnest, of course. I'm silly to listen to you. Do kiss me, darling, and not frighten me any more!"

He held her close, but still he did not comply with her request. "Did this Silvester ever kiss you?" he asked.

She shook her head vehemently, hiding her face.

"Look at me!" he said.

"No, Billikins!" she protested.

"Then tell me the truth!" he said.

"He kissed me—once, Billikins," came in distressed accents from his shoulder.

"And you?" Merryon's words sounded clipped and cold.

She shivered. "I ran right away to you. I—I didn't feel safe any more."

Merryon sat silent. Somehow he could not stir up his anger against her, albeit his inner consciousness told him that she had been to blame; but for the first time his passion was cooled. He held her without ardour, the while he wondered.

That night he awoke to the sound of her low sobbing at his side. His heart smote him He put forth a comforting hand.

She crept into his arms. "Oh, Billikins," she whispered, "keep me with you! I'm not safe—by myself."

The man's soul stirred within him. Dimly he began to understand what his protection meant to her. It was her anchor, all she had to keep her from the whirlpools. Without it she was at the mercy of every wind that blew. Again cold doubt assailed him, but he put it forcibly away. He gathered her close, and kissed the tears from her face and the trouble from her heart.

"'HE KISSED ME—ONCE, BILLIKINS,' CAME IN DISTRESSED ACCENTS FROM HIS SHOULDER."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MOUTH OF THE PIT.

So Puck had her way and stayed.

She was evidently sublimely happy—at least in Merryon's society, but she did not pick up her strength very quickly, and but for her unfailing high spirits Merryon would have felt anxious about her. There seemed to be nothing of her. She was not like a creature of flesh and blood. Yet how utterly, how abundantly, she satisfied him! She poured out her love to him in a perpetual offering that never varied or grew less. She gave him freely, eagerly, glowingly, all she had to give. With passionate triumph she answered to his need. And that need was growing. He could not blind himself to the fact. His profession no longer filled his life. There were times when he even resented its demands upon him. The sick list was rapidly growing, and from morning till night his days were full.

Puck made no complaint. She was always waiting for him, however late the hour of his return. She was always in his arms the moment the dripping overcoat was removed. Sometimes he brought work back with him, and wrestled

with regimental accounts and other details far into the night. It was not his work, but someone had to do it, and it had devolved upon him.

Puck never would go to bed without him. It was too lonely, she said; she was afraid of snakes, or rats, or bogies. She used to curl up on the *charpoy* in his room, clad in the airiest of wrappers, and doze the time away till he was ready.

One night she actually fell into a sound sleep thus, and he, finishing his work, sat on and on, watching her, loath to disturb her. There was deep pathos in her sleeping face. Lines that in her waking moments were never apparent were painfully noticeable in repose. She had the puzzled, wistful look of a child who has gone through trouble without understanding it, a hurt and piteous look.

He watched her thus till a sense of trespass came upon him, and then he rose, bent over her, and very tenderly lifted her.

She was alert on the instant, with a sharp movement of resistance. Then at once her arms went round his neck. "Oh, darling, is it you? Don't bother to carry me! You're so tired."

He smiled at the idea, and she nestled against his heart, lifting soft lips to his.

He carried her to bed, and laid her down, but she would not let him go immediately. She yet clung about his neck, hiding her face against it.

He held her closely. "Good night, little pal—little sweetheart," he said.

Her arms tightened. "Billikins!" she said.

He waited. "What is it, dear?"

She became a little agitated. He could feel her lips moving, but they said no audible word.

He waited in silence. And suddenly she raised her face and looked at him fully. There was a glory in her eyes such as he had never seen before.

"I dreamt last night that the wonderfullest thing happened," she said, her red lips quivering close to his own. "Billikins, what if—the dream came true?"

A hot wave of feeling went through him at her words. He crushed her to him, feeling the quick beat of her heart against his own, the throbbing surrender of her whole being to his. He kissed her burningly, with such a passion of devotion as had never before moved him.

She laughed rapturously. "Isn't it great, Billikins?" she said. "And I'd have missed it all if it hadn't been for you. Just think—if I hadn't jumped—before the safety-curtain—came—down!"

She was speaking between his kisses, and eventually they stopped her.

"Don't think," he said; "don't think!"

It was the beginning of a new era, the entrance of a new element into their lives. Perhaps till that night he had never looked upon her wholly in the light of wife. His blind passion for her had intoxicated him. She had been to him an elf from fairyland, a being elusive who offered him all the magic of her love, but upon whom he had no claims. But from that night his attitude towards her underwent a change. Very tenderly he took her into his own close keeping. She had become human in his eyes, no longer a wayward sprite, but a woman, eager-hearted, and his own. He gave her reverence because of that womanhood which he had only just begun to visualize in her. Out of his passion there had kindled a greater fire. All that she had in life she gave him, glorying in the gift, and in return he gave her love.

All through the days that followed he watched over her with unfailing devotion—a devotion that drew her nearer to him than she had ever been before. She was ever responsive to his mood, keenly susceptible to his every phase of feeling. But, curiously, she took no open notice of the change in him. She was sublimely happy, and like a child she lived upon happiness, asking no questions. He never saw her other than content.

Slowly that month of deadly rain wore on. The Plains had become a vast and fetid swamp, the atmosphere a weltering, steamy heat, charged with fever, leaden with despair.

But Puck was like a singing bird in the heart of the wilderness. She lived apart in a paradise of her own, and even the colonel had to relent again and bestow his grim smile upon her.

"Merryon's a lucky devil," he said, and everyone in the mess agreed with him.

But, "You wait!" said Macfarlane, the doctor, with gloomy emphasis. "There's more to come."

It was on a night of awful darkness that he uttered this prophecy, and his hearers were in too overwhelming a state of depression to debate the matter.

Merryon's bungalow was actually the only one in the station in which happiness reigned. They were sitting together in his den, smoking a great many cigarettes, listening to the perpetual patter of the rain on the roof and the drip, drip, drip of it from gutter to veranda, superbly content and "completely weather-proof," as Puck expressed it.

"I hope none of the boys will turn up to-night," she said. "We haven't room for more than two, have we?"

"Oh, someone is sure to come," responded Merryon. "They'll be getting bored directly, and come along here for coffee."

"There's someone there now," said Puck, cocking her head. "I think I shall run along to bed and leave you to do the entertaining. Shall I?"

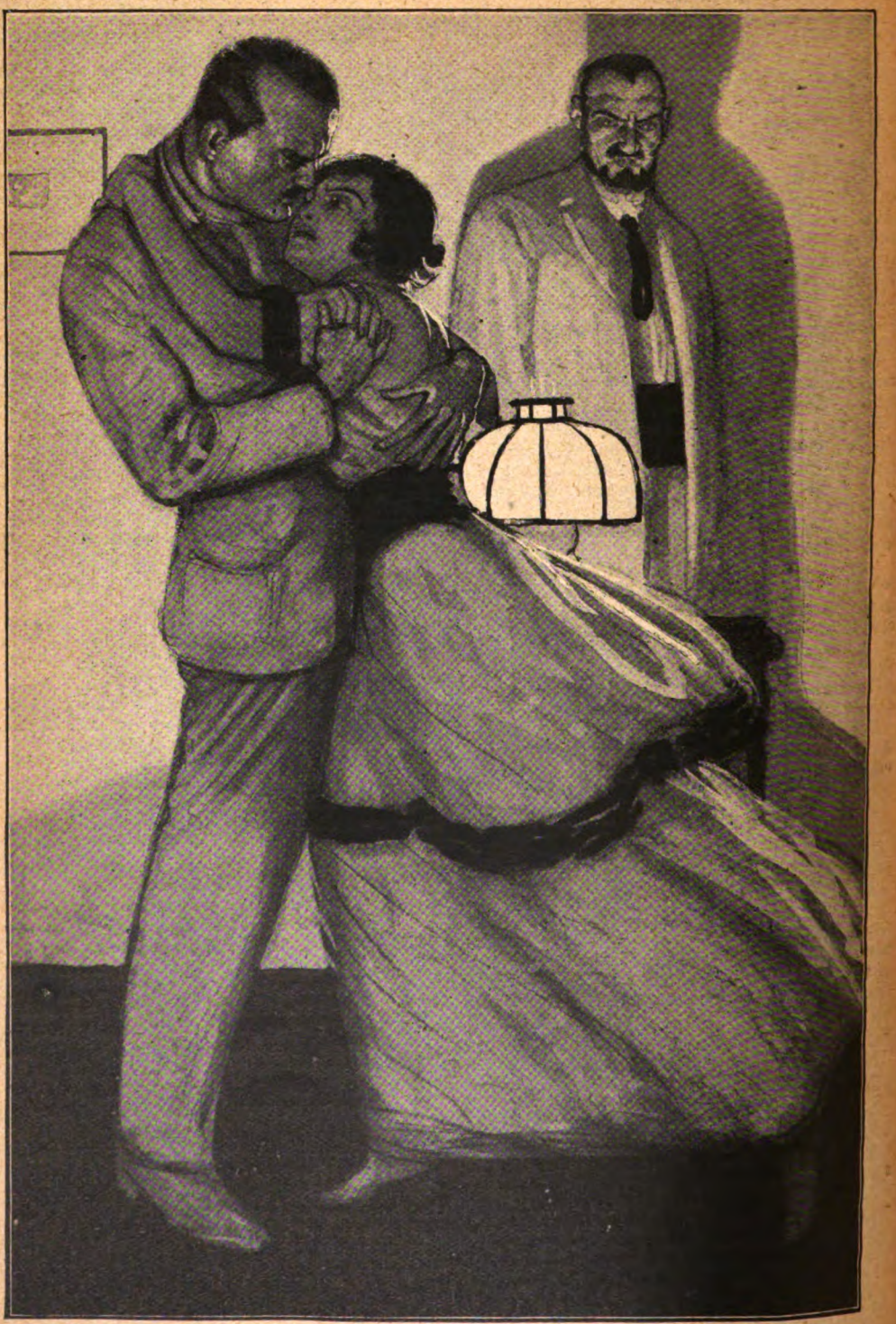
She looked at him with a mischievous smile, very bright-eyed and alert.

"It would be a quick method of getting rid of them," remarked Merryon.

She jumped up. "Very well, then. I'll go, shall I? Shall I, darling?"

He reached out a hand and grasped her wrist. "No," he said, deliberately, smiling up at her. "You'll stay and do your duty—unless you're tired," he added. "Are you?"

She stooped to bestow a swift caress upon his



"'OH, BILLIKINS, SAVE ME—SAVE ME!' SHE CRIED, AND BROKE INTO HYSTERICAL SOBBING."

forehead. "My own Billikins!" she murmured. "You're the kindest husband that ever was. Of course, I'm going to stay."

She could scarcely have effected her escape had she so desired, for already a hand was on the door. She turned towards it with the roguish smile still upon her lips.

Merryon was looking at her at the moment. She interested him far more than the visitor, whom he guessed to be one of the subalterns. And so looking, he saw the smile freeze upon her face to a mask-like immobility. And very suddenly he remembered a man whom he had once seen killed on a battlefield—killed instantaneously—while laughing at some joke. The frozen mirth, the starting eyes, the awful vacancy where the soul had been—he saw them all again in the face of his wife.

"Great heavens, Puck! What is it?" he said, and sprang to his feet.

In the same instant she turned with the movement of one tearing herself free from an evil spell, and flung herself violently upon his breast. "Oh, Billikins, save me—save me!" she cried, and broke into hysterical sobbing.

His arms were about her in a second, sheltering her, sustaining her. His eyes went beyond her to the open door.

A man was standing there—a bulky, broad-featured, coarse-lipped man with keen black eyes that twinkled maliciously between thick lids, and a black beard that only served to emphasize an immensely heavy under-jaw. Merryon summed him up swiftly as a Portuguese American with more than a dash of darker blood in his composition.

He entered the room in a fashion that was almost insulting. It was evident that he was summing up Merryon also.

The latter waited for him, stiff with hostility, his arms still tightly clasping Puck's slight, cowering form. He spoke as the stranger advanced, in his voice a deep menace like the growl of an angry beast protecting its own.

"Who are you? And what do you want?"

The stranger's lips parted, showing a gleam of strong white teeth. "My name," he said, speaking in a peculiarly soft voice that somehow reminded Merryon of the hiss of a reptile, "is Leo Vulcan. You have heard of me? Perhaps not. I am better known in the Western Hemisphere. You ask me what I want?" He raised a brown, hairy hand and pointed straight at the girl in Merryon's arms. "I want—my wife!"

Puck's cry of anguish followed the announcement, and after it came silence—a tense, hard-breathing silence, broken only by her long-drawn, agonized sobbing.

Merryon's hold had tightened all unconsciously to a grip; and she was clinging to him wildly, convulsively, as she had never clung before. He could feel the horror that pulsed through her veins; it set his own blood racing at fever-speed.

Over her head he faced the stranger with eyes of steely hardness. "You have made a mistake," he said, briefly and sternly.

The other man's teeth gleamed again. He had a way of lifting his lip when talking which gave him an oddly bestial look. "I think not," he said. "Let the lady speak for herself! She will not—I think—deny me."

There was an intolerable sneer in the last sentence. A sudden awful doubt smote through Merryon. He turned to the girl sobbing at his breast.

"Puck," he said, "for Heaven's sake—what is this man to you?"

She did not answer him; perhaps she could not. Her distress was terrible to witness, utterly beyond all control.

But the new-comer was by no means disconcerted by it. He drew near with the utmost assurance.

"Allow me to deal with her!" he said, and reached out a hand to touch her.

But at that action Merryon's wrath burst into sudden flame. "Curse you, keep away!" he thundered. "Lay a finger on her at your peril!"

The other stood still, but his eyes gleamed evilly. "My good sir," he said, "you have not yet grasped the situation. It is not a pleasant one for you—for either of us; but it has got to be grasped. I do not happen to know under what circumstances you met this woman; but I do know that she was my lawful wife before the meeting took place. In whatever light you may be pleased to regard that fact, you must admit that legally she is my property, not yours!"

"Oh, no—no—no!" moaned Puck.

Merryon said nothing. He felt strangled, as if a ligature about his throat had forced all the blood to his brain and confined it there.

After a moment the bearded man continued. "You may not know it, but she is a dancer of some repute, a circumstance which she owes entirely to me. I picked her up, a mere child in the streets of London, turning cart-wheels for a living. I took her and trained her as an acrobat. She was known on the stage as Toby the Tumbler. Everyone took her for a boy. Later, she developed a talent for dancing. It was then that I decided to marry her. She desired the marriage even more than I did." Again he smiled his brutal smile.

"Oh, no!" sobbed Puck. "Oh, no!"

He passed on with a derisive sneer. "We were married about two years ago. She became popular on the halls very soon after, and it turned her head. You may have discovered yourself by this time that she is not always as tractable as she might be. I had to teach her obedience and respect, and eventually I succeeded. I conquered her—as I hoped—completely. However, six months ago she took advantage of a stage fire to give me the slip, and till recently I believed that she was dead. Then a friend of mine—Captain Silvester—met her out here in India a few weeks back at a place called Shamkura, and recognized her. Her dancing qualities are superb. I think she displayed them a little

rashly if she really wished to remain hidden. He sent me the news, and I have come myself to claim her—and take her back."

"You can't take me back!" It was Puck's voice, but not as Merryon had ever heard it before. She flashed round like a hunted creature at bay, her eyes blazing a wild defiance into the mocking eyes opposite. "You can't take me back!" she repeated, with quivering insistence. "Our marriage was—no marriage! It was a sham—a sham! But even if—even if—it had been—a true marriage—you would have to—set me—free—now."

"And why?" said Vulcan, with his evil smile.

She was white to the lips, but she faced him unflinching. "There is—a reason," she said.

"In—deed!" He uttered a scoffing laugh of deadly insult. "The same reason, I presume, as that for which you married me?"

She flinched at that—flinched as if he had struck her across the face. "Oh, you brute!" she said, and shuddered back against Merryon's supporting arm. "You wicked brute!"

It was then that Merryon wrenched himself free from that paralyzing constriction that bound him, and abruptly intervened.

"Puck," he said, "go! Leave us! I will deal with this matter in my own way."

She made no move to obey. Her face was hidden in her hands. But she was sobbing no longer, only sickly shuddering from head to foot.

He took her by the shoulder. "Go, child, go!" he urged.

But she shook her head. "It's no good," she said. "He has got—the whip-hand."

The utter despair of her tone pierced straight to his soul. She stood as one bent beneath a crushing burden, and he knew that her face was burning behind the sheltering hands.

He still held her with a certain stubbornness of possession, though she made no further attempt to cling to him.

"What do you mean by that?" he said, bending to her. "Tell me what you mean! Don't be afraid to tell me!"

She shook her head again. "I am bound," she said, dully, "bound hand and foot."

"You mean that you really are—married to him?" Merryon spoke the words as it were through closed lips. He had a feeling as of being caught in some crushing machinery, of being slowly and inevitably ground to shapeless atoms.

Puck lifted her head at length and spoke, not looking at him. "I went through a form of marriage with him," she said, "for the sake of—of—of—decency. I always loathed him. I always shall. He only wants me now because I am—I have been—valuable to him. When he first took me he seemed kind. I was nearly starved, quite desperate, and alone. He offered to teach me to be an acrobat, to make a living. I'd better have drowned myself." A little tremor of passion went through her voice; she paused to steady it, then went on. "He taught by fear—and cruelty. He opened my eyes to evil. He used to beat me, too—tie me up in the gymnasium—and beat me with a whip till—till I was nearly beside myself and ready to promise anything—anything, only to stop the torture. And so he got everything he wanted from me, and when I began to be successful as a dancer he—married me. I thought it would make things better. I didn't think, if I were his wife, he could go on ill-treating me quite so much. But I soon found my mistake. I soon found I was even more his slave than before. And then—just a week before the fire—another woman came, and told me that it was not a real marriage; that—that he had been through exactly the same form with her—and there was nothing in it."

She stopped again at sound of a low laugh from Vulcan. "Not quite the same form, my dear," he said. "Yours was as legal and binding as the English law could make it. I have the certificate with me to prove this. As you say, you were valuable to me then—as you will be again, and so I was careful that the contract should be complete in every particular. Now—if you have quite finished your—shall we call it confession?—I suggest that you should return to your lawful husband and leave this gentleman to console himself as soon as may be. It is growing late, and it is not my intention that you should spend another night under his protection."

He spoke slowly, with a curious, compelling emphasis, and as if in answer to that compulsion Puck's eyes came back to his.

"Oh, no!" she said, in a quick, frightened whisper. "No! I can't! I can't!"

Yet she made a movement towards him as if drawn irresistibly.

And at that movement, wholly involuntary as it was, something in Merryon's brain seemed to burst. He saw all things a burning, intolerable red. With a strangled oath he caught her back, held her violently—a prisoner in his arms.

"By God, no!" he said. "I'll kill you first!"

She turned in his embrace. She lifted her lips and passionately kissed him. "Yes, kill me! Kill me!" she cried to him. "I'd rather die!"

Again the stranger laughed, though his eyes were devilish. "You had better come without further trouble," he remarked. "You will only add to your punishment—which will be no light one as it is—by these hysterics. Do you wish to see my proofs?" He addressed Merryon with sudden open malignancy. "Or am I to take them to the colonel of your regiment?"

"You may take them to the devil!" Merryon said. He was holding her crushed to his heart. He flung his furious challenge over her head. "If the marriage was genuine you shall set her free. If it was not"—he paused, and ended in a voice half-choked with passion—"you can go to blazes!"

The other man showed his teeth in a wolfish

snarl. "She is my wife," he said, in his slow, sibilant way. "I shall not set her free. And—wherever I go, she will go also."

"If you can take her, you infernal blackguard!" Merryon threw at him. "Now get out. Do you hear? Get out—if you don't want to be shot! Whatever happens to-morrow, I swear by God in heaven she shall not go with you to-night!"

The uncontrolled violence of his speech was terrible. His hold upon Puck was violent also, more violent than he knew. Her whole body lay a throbbing weight upon him, and he was not even aware of it.

"Go!" he reiterated, with eyes of leaping flame. "Go! or——" He left the sentence uncompleted. It was even more terrible than his flow of words had been. The whole man vibrated with a wrath that possessed him in a fashion so colossal as to render him actually sublime. He mastered the situation by the sheer, indomitable might of his fury. There was no standing against him. It would have been as easy to stem a racing torrent.

Vulcan, for all his insolence, realized the fact. The man's strength in that moment was gigantic, practically limitless. There was no coping with it. Still with the snarl upon his lips he turned away.

"You will pay for this, my wife," he said. "You will pay in full. When I punish, I punish well."

He reached the door and opened it, still leering back at the limp, girlish form in Merryon's arms.

"It will not be soon over," he said. "It will take many days, many nights, that punishment—till you have left off crying for mercy, or expecting it."

He was on the threshold. His eyes suddenly shot up with a gloating hatred to Merryon's.

"And you," he said, "will have the pleasure of knowing every night when you lie down alone that she is either writhing under the lash—a frequent exercise for a while, my good sir—or finding subtle comfort in my arms; both pleasant subjects for your dreams."

He was gone. The door closed slowly, noiselessly, upon his exit. There was no sound of departing feet.

But Merryon neither listened nor cared. He had turned Puck's deathly face upwards, and was covering it with burning, passionate kisses, drawing her back to life, as it were, by the fiery intensity of his worship.

CHAPTER IX.

GREATER THAN DEATH.

SHE came to life, weakly gasping. She opened her eyes upon him with the old, unwavering adoration in their depths. And then before his burning look hers sank. She hid her face against him with an inarticulate sound more anguished than any weeping.

The savagery went out of his hold. He drew her to the *charpoy* on which she had spent so many evenings waiting for him, and made her sit down.

She did not cling to him any longer; she only covered her face so that he should not see it, huddling herself together in a piteous heap, her black, curly head bowed over her knees in an overwhelming agony of humiliation.

Yet there was in the situation something that was curiously reminiscent of that night when she had leapt from the burning stage into the safety of his arms. Now, as then, she was utterly dependent upon the charity of his soul.

He turned from her and poured brandy and water into a glass. He came back and knelt beside her.

"Drink it, my darling!" he said.

She made a quick gesture as of surprised protest. She did not raise her head. It was as if an invisible hand were crushing her to the earth.

"Why don't you—kill me?" she said.

He laid his hand upon her bent head. "Because you are the salt of the earth to me," he said; "because I worship you."

She caught the hand with a little sound of passionate endearment, and laid her face down in it, her hot, quivering lips against his palm. "I love you so!" she said. "I love you so!"

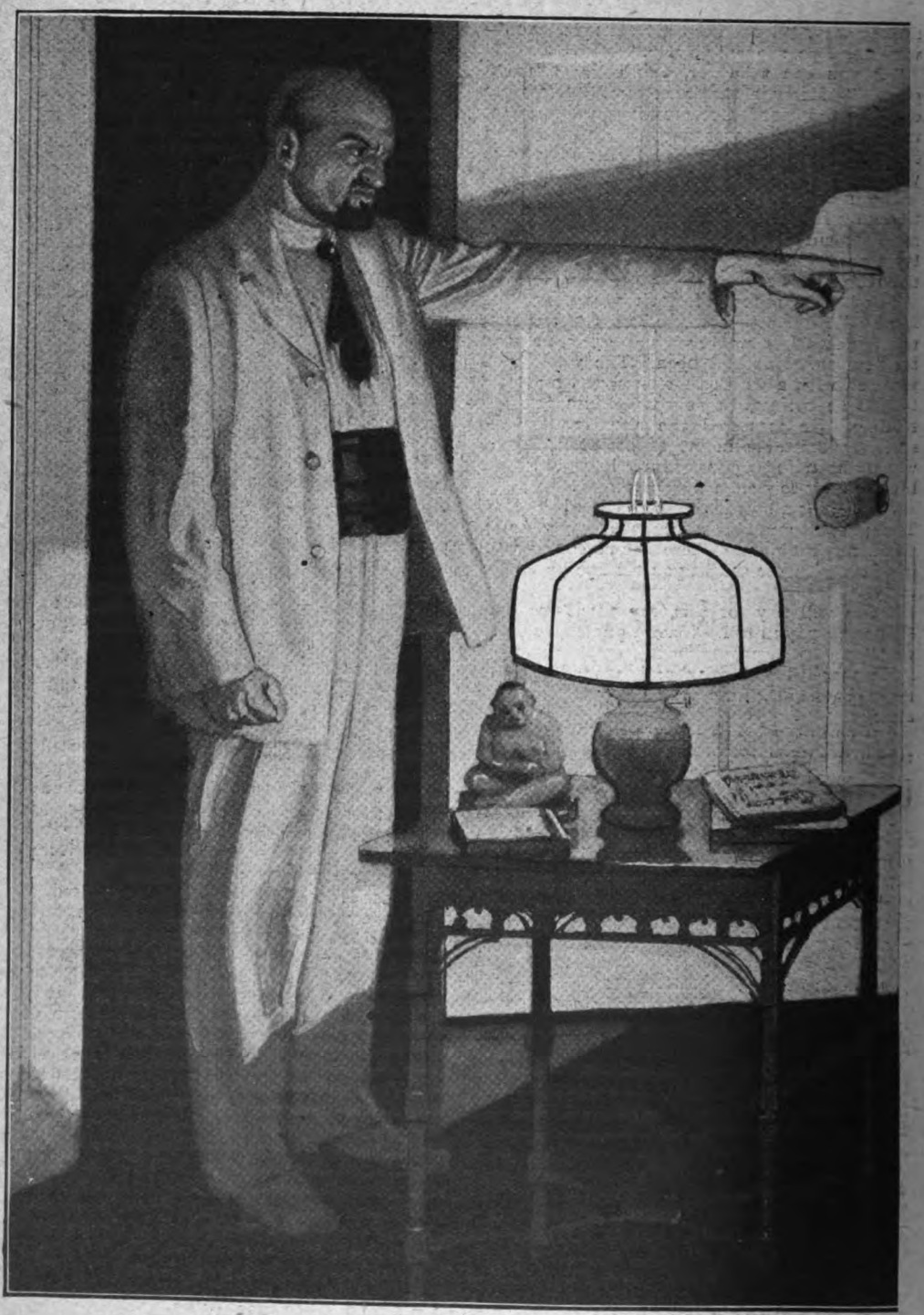
He pressed her face slowly upwards. But she resisted. "No, no! I can't—meet—your—eyes."

"You need not be afraid," he said. "Once and for all, Puck, believe me when I tell you that this thing shall never—can never—come between us."

She caught her breath sharply; but still she refused to look up. "Then you don't understand," she said. "You—you—can't understand that—that—I was—his—his——" Her voice failed. She caught his hand in both her own, pressing it hard over her face, writhing in mute shame before him.

"Yes, I do understand," Merryon said, and his voice was very quiet, full of a latent force that thrilled her magnetically. "I understand that when you were still a child this brute took possession of you, broke you to his will, did as he pleased with you. I understand that you were as helpless as a rabbit in the grip of a weasel. I understand that he was always an abomination and a curse to you, that when deliverance offered you seized it; and I do not forget that you would have preferred death if I would have let you die. Do you know, Puck"—his voice had softened by imperceptible degrees; he was bending towards her so that she could feel his breath on her neck while he spoke—"when I took it upon me to save you from yourself that night I knew—I guessed—what had happened to you? No, don't start like that! If there was anything to forgive I forgave you long ago. I understood. Believe me, though I am a man, I can understand."

He stopped. His hand was all wet with her tears. "Oh, darling!" she whispered. "Oh, darling!"



"'SHE IS MY WIFE,' HE SAID, IN HIS SLOW, SIBILANT WAY. 'I SHALL

NOT SET HER FREE. AND—WHEREVER I GO, SHE WILL GO ALSO.'"

"Don't cry, sweetheart!" he said. "And don't be afraid any longer! I took you from your inferno. I learnt to love you—just as you were, dear, just as you were. You tried to keep me at a distance; do you remember? And then—you found life was too strong for you. You came back and gave yourself to me. Have you ever regretted it, my darling? Tell me that!"

"Never!" she sobbed. "Never! Your love—your love—has been—the safety-curtain—always—between me and—harm."

And then very suddenly she lifted her face, her streaming eyes, and met his look.

"But there's one thing, darling," she said, "which you must know. I loved you always—always—even before that monsoon night. But I came to you then because—because—I knew that I had been recognized, and—I was afraid—I was terrified—till—till I was safe in your arms."

"Ah! But you came to me," he said.

A sudden gleam of mirth shot through her woe. "My! That was a night, Billikins!" she said. And then the clouds came back upon her, overwhelming her. "Oh, what is there to laugh at? How could I laugh?"

He lifted the glass he held and drank from it, then offered it to her. "Drink with me!" he said.

She took, not the glass, but his wrist, and drank with her eyes upon his face.

When she had finished she drew his arms about her, and lay against his shoulder with closed eyes for a space, saying no word.

At last, with a little murmuring sigh, she spoke. "What is going to happen, Billikins?"

"God knows," he said.

But there was no note of dismay in his voice. His hold was strong and steadfast.

She stirred a little. "Do you believe in God?" she asked him, for the second time.

He had not answered her before; he answered her now without hesitation. "Yes, I do."

She lifted her head to look at him. "I wonder why?" she said.

He was silent for a moment; then, "Just because I can hold you in my arms," he said, "and feel that nothing else matters—or can matter again."

"You really feel that?" she said, quickly. "You really love me, dear?"

"That is love," he said, simply.

"Oh, darling!" Her breath came fast. "Then, if they try to take me from you—you will really do it—you won't be afraid?"

"Do what?" he questioned, sombrely.

"Kill me, Billikins," she answered, swiftly. "Kill me—sooner than let me go."

He bent his head. "Yes," he said. "My love is strong enough for that."

"But what would you do—afterwards?" she breathed, her lips raised to his.

A momentary surprise showed in his eyes. "Afterwards?" he questioned.

"After I was gone, darling?" she said, anxiously.

A very strange smile came over Merryon's face. He pressed her to him, his eyes gazing deep into hers. He kissed her, but not passionately, rather with reverence.

"Your afterwards will be mine, dear, wherever it is," he said. "If it comes to that—if there is any going—in that way—we go together."

The anxiety went out of her face in a second. She smiled back at him with utter confidence. "Oh, Billikins!" she said. "Oh, Billikins, that will be great!"

She went back into his arms, and lay there for a further space, saying no word. There was something sacred in the silence between them, something mysterious and wonderful. The drip, drip, drip of the ceaseless rain was the only sound in the stillness. They seemed to be alone together in a sanctuary that none other might enter, husband and wife, made one by the Bond Imperishable, waiting together for deliverance. They were the most precious moments that either had ever known, for in them they were more truly wedded in spirit than they had ever been before.

How long the great silence lasted neither could have said. It lay like a spell for awhile, and like a spell it passed.

Merryon moved at last, moved and looked down into his wife's eyes.

They met his instantly without a hint of shrinking; they even smiled. "It must be nearly bed-time," she said. "You are not going to be busy to-night?"

"Not to-night," he said.

"Then don't let's sit up any longer, darling," she said. "We can't either of us afford to lose our beauty sleep."

She rose with him, still with her shining eyes lifted to his, still with that brave gaiety sparkling in their depths. She gave his arm a tight little squeeze. "My, Billikins, how you've grown!" she said, admiringly. "You always were—pretty big. But to-night you're just—titanic!"

He smiled and touched her cheek, not speaking.

"You fill the world," she said.

He bent once more to kiss her. "You fill my heart," he said.

CHAPTER X.

THE SACRIFICE.

THEY went round the bungalow together to see to the fastenings of doors and windows. The *khitmutgar* had gone to his own quarters for the night, and they were quite alone. The drip, drip, drip of the rain was still the only sound, save when the far cry of a prowling jackal came weirdly through the night.

"It's more gruesome than usual somehow," said Puck, still fast clinging to her husband's arm. "I'm not a bit frightened, darling, only sort of creepy at the back. But there's nobody here but you and me, is there?"

"Nobody," said Merryon.

"And will you please come and see if there are any snakes or scorpions before I begin to undress?" she said. "The very fact of looking under my bed makes my hair stand on end."

He went with her and made a thorough investigation, finding nothing.

"That's all right," she said, with a sigh of relief. "And yet, somehow, I feel as if something is waiting round the corner to pounce out on us. Is it Fate, do you think? Or just my silly fancy?"

"I think it is probably your startled nerves, dear," he said, smiling a little.

She assented with a half-suppressed shudder. "But I'm sure something will happen directly," she said. "I'm sure. I'm sure."

"Well, I shall only be in the next room if it does," he said.

He was about to leave her, but she sprang after him, clinging to his arm. "And you won't be late, will you?" she pleaded. "I can't sleep without you. Ah, what is that? What is it? What is it?"

Her voice rose almost to a shriek. A sudden loud knocking had broken through the endless patter of the rain.

Merryon's face changed a very little. The iron-grey eyes became stony, quite expressionless. He stood a moment listening. Then, "Stay here!" he said, his voice very level and composed. "Yes, Puck, I wish it. Stay here!"

It was a distinct command, the most distinct he had ever given her. Her clinging hands slipped from his arm. She stood rigid, unprotesting, white as death.

The knocking was renewed with fevered energy as Merryon turned quietly to obey the summons. He closed the door upon his wife and went down the passage.

There was no haste in his movements as he slipped back the bolts, rather the studied deliberation of purpose of a man armed against all emergency. But the door burst inwards against him the moment he opened it, and one of his subalterns, young Harley, almost fell into his arms.

Merryon steadied him with the utmost composure. "Halloa, Harley! You, is it? What's all this noise about?"

The boy pulled himself together with an effort. He was white to the lips.

"There's cholera broken out," he said. "Forbes and Robey—both down—at their own bungalow. And they've got it at the barracks too. Macfarlane's there. Can you come?"

"Of course—at once." Merryon pulled him forward. "Go in there and get a drink while I speak to my wife!"

He turned back to her door, but she met him on the threshold. Her eyes burned like stars in her little pale face.

'It's all right, Billikins," she said, and swallowed hard. "I heard. You've got to go to the barracks, haven't you, darling? I knew there was going to be—something. Well, you must take something to eat in your pocket. You'll want it before morning. And some brandy too. Give me your flask, darling, and I'll fill it!"

Her composure amazed him. He had expected anguished distress at the bare idea of his leaving her, but those brave, bright eyes of hers were actually smiling.

"Puck!" he said. "You—wonder!"

She made a small face at him. "Oh, you're not the only wonder in the world," she told him. "Run along and get yourself ready! My! You are going to be busy, aren't you?"

She nodded to him and ran into the drawing-room to young Harley. He heard her chatting there while he made swift preparations for departure, and he thanked Heaven that she realized so little the ghastly nature of the horror that had swept down upon them. He hoped the boy would have the sense to let her remain unenlightened. It was bad enough to have to leave her after the ordeal they had just faced together. He did not want her terrified on his account as well.

But when he joined them she was still smiling, eager only to provide for any possible want of his, not thinking of herself at all.

"I hope you will enjoy your picnic, Billikins," she said. "I'll shut the door after you, and I shall know it's properly fastened. Oh, yes, the *khit* will take care of me, Mr. Harley. He's such a brave man. He kills snakes without the smallest change of countenance. Good night, Billikins! Take care of yourself! I suppose you'll come back some time?"

She gave him the lightest caress imaginable, shook hands affectionately with young Harley, who was looking decidedly less pinched than he had upon arrival, and stood waving an energetic hand as they went away into the dripping dark.

"You didn't tell her—anything?" Merryon asked, as they plunged down the road.

"Not more than I could help, major. But she seemed to know without." The lad spoke uncomfortably, as if against his will.

"She asked questions, then?" Merryon's voice was sharp.

"Yes, a few. She wanted to know about Forbes and Robey. Robey is awfully bad. I didn't tell her that."

"Who is looking after them?" Merryon asked.

"Only a native orderly now. The colonel and Macfarlane both had to go to the barracks. It's frightful there. About twenty cases already. Oh, hang this rain!" said Harley, bitterly.

"But couldn't they take them—Forbes, I mean, and Robey—to the hospital?" questioned Merryon.

"No. To tell you the truth, Robey is pegging out, poor old fellow. It's always the best chaps that go first, though, Heaven knows, we may be all gone before this time to-morrow."

"Don't talk like a fool!" said Merryon, curtly.

And Harley said no more.

They pressed on through mud that was ankle-deep to the barracks.

There during all the nightmare hours that followed Merryon worked with the strength of ten. He gave no voluntary thought to his wife

waiting for him in loneliness, but ever and anon those blazing eyes of hers rose before his mental vision, and he saw again that brave, sweet smile with which she had watched him go.

The morning found him haggard but indomitable, wrestling with the difficulties of establishing a camp a mile or more from the barracks out in the rain-drenched open. There had been fourteen deaths in the night, and seven men were still fighting a losing battle for their lives in the hospital. He had a native officer to help him in his task; young Harley was superintending the digging of graves, and the colonel had gone to the bungalow where the two stricken officers lay.

Dank and gruesome dawned the day, with the smell of rot in the air and the sense of death hovering over all. And there came to Merryon a sudden, overwhelming desire to go back to his bungalow beyond the fetid town and see how his wife was faring. She was the only white woman in the place, and the thought of her isolation came upon him now like a fiery torture.

It was the fiercest temptation he had ever known. Till that day his regimental duties had always been placed first with rigorous determination. Now for the first time he found himself torn by conflicting ties. The craving for news of her possessed him like a burning thirst. Yet he knew that some hours must elapse before he could honestly consider himself free to go.

He called an orderly at last, finding the suspense unendurable, and gave him a scribbled line to carry to his wife.

"Is all well, sweetheart? Send back word by bearer," he wrote, and told the man not to return without an answer.

The orderly departed, and for a while Merryon devoted himself to the matter in hand, and crushed his anxiety into the background. But at the end of an hour he was chafing in a fever of impatience. What delayed the fellow? In Heaven's name, why was he so long?

Ghastly possibilities arose in his mind, fears unspeakable that he dared not face. He forced himself to attend to business, but the suspense was becoming intolerable. He began to realize that he could not stand it much longer.

He was nearing desperation when the colonel came unexpectedly upon the scene, unshaven and haggard as he was himself, but firm as a rock in the face of adversity.

He joined Merryon, and received the latter's report, grimly taciturn. They talked together for a space of needs and expediencies. The fell disease had got to be checked somehow. He spoke of recalling the officers on leave. There had been such a huge sick list that summer that they were reduced to less than half their normal strength.

"You're worth a good many," he said to Merryon, half-grudgingly, "but you can't work miracles. Besides, you've got——" He broke off abruptly. "How's your wife?"

"That's what I don't know, sir." Feverishly Merryon made answer. "I left her last night. She was well then. But since—I sent down an orderly over an hour ago. He's not come back."

"Confound it!" said she colonel, testily. "You'd better go yourself."

Merryon glanced swiftly round.

"Yes, go, go!" the colonel reiterated, irritably. "I'll relieve you for a spell. Go and satisfy yourself—and me! None but an infernal fool would have kept her here," he added, in a growling undertone, as Merryon lifted a hand in brief salute and started away through the sodden mists.

He went as he had never gone in his life before, and as he went the mists parted before him and a blinding ray of sunshine came smiting through the gap like the sword of the destroyer. The simile rushed through his mind and out again, even as the grey mist-curtain closed once more.

He reached the bungalow. It stood like a shrouded ghost, and the drip, drip, drip of the rain on the veranda came to him like a death-knell.

A gaunt figure met him almost on the threshold, and he recognized his messenger with a sharp sense of coming disaster. The man stood mutely at the salute.

"Well? Well? Speak!" he ordered, nearly beside himself with anxiety. "Why didn't you come back with an answer?"

The man spoke with deep submission. "*Sahib*, there was no answer."

"What do you mean by that? What the—— Here, let me pass!" cried Merryon, in a ferment. "There must have been—some sort of answer."

"No, *sahib*. No answer." The man spoke with inscrutable composure. "The *mem-sahib* has not come back," he said. "Let the *sahib* see for himself."

But Merryon had already burst into the bungalow; so he resumed his patient watch on the veranda, wholly undisturbed, supremely patient.

The *khitmutgar* came forward at his master's noisy entrance. There was a trace—just the shadow of a suggestion—of anxiety on his dignified face under the snow-white turban. He presented him with a note on a salver with a few murmured words and a deep salaam.

"For the *sahib's* hands alone," he said.

Merryon snatched up the note and opened it with shaking hands.

It was very brief, pathetically so, and as he read a great emptiness seemed to spread and spread around him in an ever-widening desolation.

"Good-bye, my Billikins!" Ah, the pitiful, childish scrawl she had made of it! "I've come to my senses, and I've gone back to him. I'm not worthy of any sacrifice of yours, dear. And it would have been a big sacrifice. You wouldn't like being dragged through the mud, but I'm used to it. It came to me just that moment that you said 'Yes, of course,' when Mr. Harley came to call you back to duty. Duty is better than a worthless woman, my

Billikins, and I was never fit to be anything more than a toy to you—a toy to play with and toss aside. And so good-bye, good-bye!"

The scrawl ended with a little cross at the bottom of the page. He looked up from it with eyes gone blind with pain and a stunned and awful sense of loss.

"When did the *mem-sahib* go?" he questioned, dully.

The *khitmutgar* bent his stately person. "The *mem-sahib* went in haste," he said, "an hour before midnight. Your servant followed her to the *dâk-bungalow* to protect her from *budmashes*, but she dismissed me ere she entered in. *Sahib*, I could do no more."

The man's eyes appealed for one instant, but fell the next before the dumb despair that looked out of his master's.

There fell a terrible silence—a pause, as it were, of suspended vitality, while the iron bit deeper and deeper into tissues too numbed to feel.

Then, "Fetch me a drink!" said Merryon, curtly. "I must be getting back to duty."

And with soundless promptitude the man withdrew, thankful to make his escape.

"MERRYON SNATCHED UP THE NOTE AND OPENED IT WITH SHAKING HANDS."

CHAPTER XI.

THE SACRED FIRE.

"WELL? Is she all right?" Almost angrily the colonel flung the question as his second-in-command came back heavy-footed through the rain. He had been through a nasty period of suspense himself during Merryon's absence.

Merryon nodded. His face was very pale and his lips seemed stiff.

"She has—gone, sir," he managed to say, after a moment.

"Gone, has she?" The colonel raised his brows in astonished interrogation. "What! Taken fright at last? Well, best thing she could do, all things considered. You ought to be very thankful."

He dismissed the subject for more pressing matters, and he never noticed the awful whiteness of Merryon's face or the deadly fixity of his look.

Macfarlane noticed both, coming up two hours later to report the death of one of the officers at the bungalow.

"For Heaven's sake, man, have some brandy!" he said, proffering a flask of his own. "You're looking pretty unhealthy. What is it? Feeling a bit off, eh?"

He held Merryon's wrist while he drank the brandy, regarding him with a troubled frown the while.

"What is the matter with you, man?" he said. "You're not frightening yourself? You wouldn't be such a fool!"

Merryon did not answer. He was never voluble. To-day he seemed tongue-tied.

Macfarlane continued with an uneasy effort to hide a certain doubt stirring in his mind. "I hear there was a European died at the *dâk-bungalow* early this morning. I wanted to go round and see, but I haven't been able. It's fairly widespread, but there's no sense in getting scared. Halloa, Merryon!"

He broke off, staring. Merryon had given a great start. He looked like a man stabbed suddenly from a dream to full consciousness.

"A European—at the *dâk-bungalow*—dead, did you say?"

His words tumbled over each other; he gripped Macfarlane's shoulder and shook it with fierce impatience.

"So I heard. I don't know any details.

How should I? Merryon, are you mad?" Macfarlane put up a quick hand to free himself, for the grip was painful. "He wasn't a friend of yours, I suppose? He wouldn't have been putting up there if he had been."

"No, no; not—a friend." The words came jerkily. Merryon was breathing in great spasms that shook him from head to foot. "Not—a friend!" he said again, and stopped, gazing before him with eyes curiously contracted as the eyes of one striving to discern something a long way off.

Macfarlane slipped a hand under his elbow. "Look here," he said, "you must have a rest. You can be spared for a bit now. Walk back with me to the hospital, and we will see how things are going there."

His hand closed urgently. He began to draw him away.

Merryon's eyes came back as it were out of space, and gave him a quick side-glance that was like the turn of a rapier. "I must go down to the *dâk-bungalow*," he said, with decision.

Swift protest rose to the doctor's lips, but it died there. He tightened his hold instead, and went with him.

The colonel looked round sharply at their approach, looked—and swore under his breath. "Yes, all right, major, you'd better go," he said. "Good-bye."

Merryon essayed a grim smile, but his ashen face only twisted convulsively, showing his set teeth. He hung on Macfarlane's shoulder while the first black cloud of agony possessed him and slowly passed.

Then, white and shaking, he stood up. "I'll get round to the *dâk* now, before I'm any worse. Don't come with me, Macfarlane! I'll take an orderly."

"I'm coming," said Macfarlane, stoutly.

But they did not get to the *dâk-bungalow*, or anywhere near it. Before they had covered twenty yards another frightful spasm of pain came upon Merryon, racking his whole being, depriving him of all his powers, wresting from him every faculty save that of suffering. He went down into a darkness that swallowed him, soul and body, blotting out all finite things, loosening his frantic clutch on life, sucking him down as it were into a frightful emptiness, where his only certainty of existence lay in the excruciating agonies that tore and convulsed him like devils in some inferno under the earth.

Of time and place and circumstance thereafter he became as completely unconscious as though they had ceased to be, though once or twice he was aware of a merciful hand that gave him opium to deaden—or was it only to prolong?—his suffering. And æons and eternities passed over him while he lay in the rigour of perpetual torments, not trying to escape, only writhing in futile anguish in the bitter dark of the prison-house.

Later, very much later, there came a time when the torture gradually ceased or became merged in a deathly coldness. During that stage his understanding began to come back to him like the light of a dying day. A vague and dreadful sense of loss began to oppress him, a feeling of nakedness as though the soul of him were already slipping free, passing into an appalling void, leaving an appalling void behind. He lay quite helpless and sinking, sinking—slowly, terribly sinking into an overwhelming sea of annihilation.

With all that was left of his failing strength he strove to cling to that dim light which he knew for his own individuality. The silence and the darkness broke over him in long, soundless waves; but each time he emerged again, cold, cold as death, but still aware of self, aware of existence, albeit the world he knew had dwindled to an infinitesimal smallness, as an object very far away, and floating ever farther and farther from his ken.

Vague paroxysms of pain still seized him from time to time, but they no longer affected him in the same way. The body alone agonized. The soul stood apart on the edge of that dreadful sea, shrinking afraid from the black, black depths and the cruel cold of the eternal night. He was terribly, crushingly alone.

Someone had once, twice, asked him a vital question about his belief in God. Then he had been warmly alive. He had held his wife close in his arms, and nothing else had mattered. But now—but now—he was very far from warmth and life. He was dying in loneliness. He was perishing in the outer dark, where no hand might reach and no voice console. He had believed—or thought he believed—in God. But now his faith was wearing very thin. Very soon it would crumble quite away, just as he himself was crumbling into the dreadful silence of the ages. His life—the brief passion called life—was over. Out of the dark it had come; into the dark it went. And no one to care—no one to cry farewell to him across that desolation of emptiness that was death! No one to kneel beside him and pray for light in that awful, all-encompassing dark!

Stay! Something had touched him even then. Or was it but his dying fancy? Red lips he had kissed and that had kissed him in return, eager arms that had clung and clung, eyes of burning adoration! Did they truly belong all to the past? Or were they here beside him even now—even now? Had he wandered backwards perchance into that strange, sweet heaven of love from which he had been so suddenly and terribly cast out? Ah, how he had loved her! How he had loved her! Very faintly there began to stir within him the old fiery longing that she, and she alone, had ever waked within him. He would worship her to the last flicker of his dying soul. But the darkness was spreading, spreading, like the yawning of a great gulf at his feet. Already he was slipping over the edge. The light was fading out of his sky.

It was the last dim instinct of nature that made him reach out a groping hand, and with lips that would scarcely move to whisper, "Puck!"

He did not expect an answer. The things of earth were done with. His life was passing swiftly, swiftly, like the sands running out of a glass. He had lost her already, and the world had sunk away, away, with all warmth and light and love.

Yet out of the darkness all suddenly there came a voice, eager, passionate, persistent. "I am here, Billikins! I am here! Come back to me, darling! Come back!"

He started at that voice, started and paused, holding back as it were on the very verge of the precipice. So she was there indeed! He could hear her sobbing breath. There came to him the consciousness of her hands clasping his, and the faintest, vaguest glow went through his ice-cold body. He tried, piteously weak as he was, to bend his fingers about hers.

And then there came the warmth of her lips upon them, kissing them with a fierce passion of tenderness, drawing them close as if to breathe her own vitality into his failing pulses.

"Open your eyes to me, darling!" she besought him. "See how I love you! And see how I want your love! I can't do without it, Billikins. It's my only safeguard. What! He is dead? I say he is not—he is not! Or if he is, he shall rise again. He shall come back. See! He is looking at me! How dare you say he is dead?"

The wild anguish of her voice reached him, pierced him, rousing him as no other power on earth could have roused him. Out of that deathly inertia he drew himself, inch by inch, as out of some clinging swamp. His hand found strength to tighten upon hers. He opened his eyes, leaden-lidded as they were, and saw her face all white and drawn, gazing into his own with such an agony of love, such a consuming fire of worship, that it seemed as if his whole being were drawn by it, warmed, comforted, revived.

She hung above him, fierce in her devotion, driving back the destroyer by the sheer burning intensity of her love. "You sha'n't die, Billikins!" she told him, passionately. "You can't die—now I am here!"

She stooped her face to his. He turned his lips instinctively to meet it, and suddenly it was as though a flame had kindled between them—hot, ardent, compelling. His dying pulses thrilled to it, his blood ran warmer.

"You—have—come—back!" he said, with slow articulation.

"My darling—my darling!" she made quivering answer. "Say I've come—in time!"

He tried to speak again, but could not. Yet the deathly cold was giving way like ice before the sun. He could feel his heart beating where before he had felt nothing. A hand that was not Puck's came out of the void beyond her and held a spoonful of spirit to his mouth. He swallowed it with difficulty, and was conscious of a greater warmth.

"There, my own boy, my own boy!" she murmured over him. "You're coming back to me. Say you're coming back!"

His lips quivered like a child's. He forced them to answer her. "If you—will—stay," he said.

"I will never leave you again, darling," she made swift answer. "Never, never again! You shall have all that you want—all—all!"

Her arms closed about him. He felt the warmth of her body, the passionate nearness of her soul; and therewith the flame that had kindled between them leaped to a great and burning glow, encompassing them both—the Sacred Fire.

A wonderful sense of comfort came upon him. He turned to her as a man turns to only one woman in all the world, and laid his head upon her breast.

"I only want—my wife," he said.

CHAPTER XII.

FREEDOM.

It took him many days to climb back up that slope down which he had slipped so swiftly in those few awful hours. Very slowly, with painful effort, but with unfailing purpose, he made his arduous way. And through it all Puck never left his side.

Alert and vigilant, very full of courage, very quick of understanding, she drew him, leaning on her, back to a life that had become strangely new to them both. They talked very little, for Merryon's strength was terribly low, and Macfarlane, still scarcely believing in the miracle that had been wrought under his eyes, forbade all but the simplest and briefest speech—a prohibition which Puck strenuously observed; for Puck, though she knew the miracle for an accomplished fact, was not taking any chances.

"Presently, darling; when you're stronger," was her invariable answer to any attempt on his part to elicit information as to the events that had immediately preceded his seizure. "There's nothing left to fret about. You're here—and I'm here. And that's all that matters."

If her lips quivered a little over the last assertion, she turned her head away that he might not see. For she was persistently cheery in his presence, full of tender humour, always undismayed.

He leaned upon her instinctively. She propped him so sturdily, with a strength so amazing and so steadfast. Sometimes she laughed softly at his weakness, as a mother might laugh at the first puny efforts of her baby to stand alone. And he knew that she loved his dependence upon her, even in a sense dreaded the time when his own strength should reassert itself, making hers weak by comparison.

But that time was coming, slowly yet very surely. The rains were lessening at last, and the cholera-fiend had been driven forth. Merryon was to go to the Hills on sick leave for several weeks. Colonel Davenant had awaked to the fact that his life was a valuable one, and his admiration for Mrs. Merryon was undisguised. He did not altogether understand her behaviour, but he was discreet enough not to seek that

enlightenment which only one man in the world was ever to receive.

To that man on the night before their departure came Puck, very pale and resolute, with shining, unwavering eyes. She knelt down before him with small hands tightly cla sped.

"I'm going to say something dreadful, Billikins," she said.

He looked at her for a moment or two in silence. Then, "I know what you are going to say," he said.

She shook her head. "Oh, no, you don't, darling. It's something that'll make you frightfully angry."

The faintest gleam of a smile crossed Merryon's face. "With you?" he said.

She nodded, and suddenly her eyes were brimming with tears. "Yes, with me."

He put his hand on her shoulder. "I tell you, I know what it is," he said, with a certain stubbornness.

She turned her cheek for a moment to caress the hand; then suddenly all her strength went from her. She sank down on the floor at his feet, huddled together in a woeful heap, just as she had been on that first night when the safety-curtain had dropped behind her.

"You'll never forgive me!" she sobbed. "But I knew—I knew—I always knew!"

"'YOU—HAVE—COME—BACK!' HE SAID. 'MY DARLING—MY

"Knew what, child?" He was stooping over her. His hand, trembling still with weakness, was on her head. "But, no, don't tell me!" he said, and his voice was deeply tender. "The fellow is dead, isn't he?"

"Oh, yes, he's dead." Quiveringly, between piteous sobs, she answered him. "He—was dying before I reached him—that dreadful night. He just—had strength left—to curse me! And I am cursed! I am cursed!"

She flung out her arms wildly, clasping his feet.

He stooped lower over her. "Hush—hush!" he said.

She did not seem to hear. "I let you take me—I stained your honour—I wasn't a free woman. I tried to think I was; but in my heart—I always knew—I always knew! I wouldn't have your love at first—because I knew. And I came to you—that monsoon night—chiefly because—I wanted—when he came after me—as I knew he would come—to force him—to set me—free."

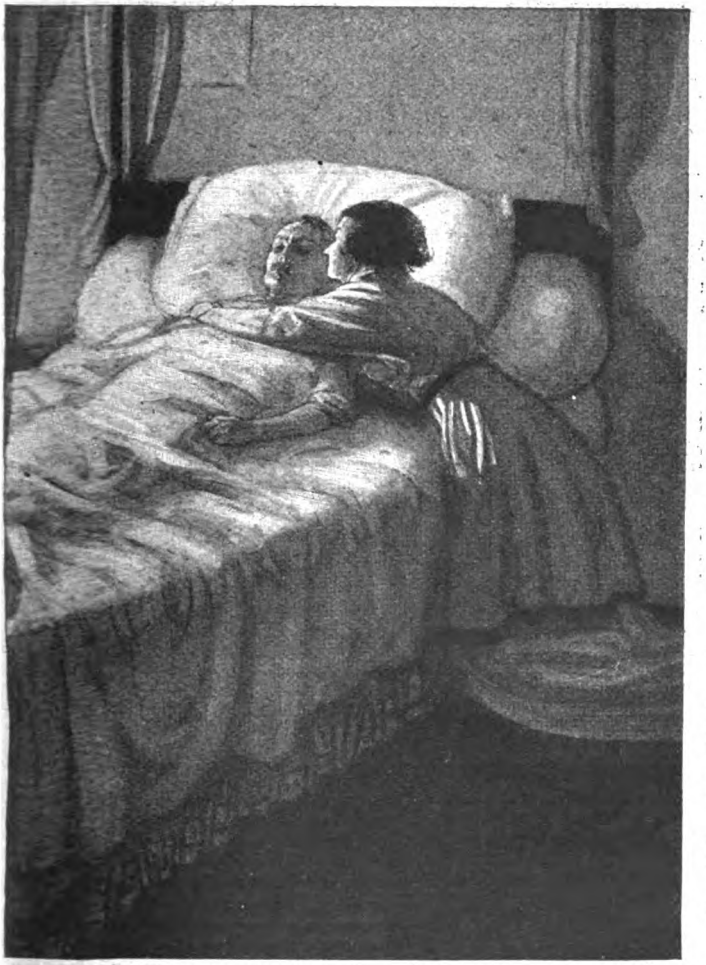
Through bitter sobbing the confession came; in bitter sobbing it ended.

But still Merryon's hand was on her head, still his face was bent above her, grave and sad and pitiful, the face of a strong man enduring grief.

After a little, haltingly, she spoke again. "And I wasn't coming back to you—ever. Only—someone—a *syce*—told me you had been stricken down. And then I had to come. I couldn't leave you to die. That's all—that's all! I'm going now. And I sha'n't come back. I'm not—your wife. You're quite, quite free. And I'll never—bring shame on you—again."

Her straining hands tightened. She kissed the feet she clasped. "I'm a wicked, wicked woman," she said. "I was born—on the wrong side—of the safety-curtain. That's no—excuse; only—to make you understand."

She would have withdrawn herself then, but his hands held her. She covered her face, kneeling between them.



DARLING!" SHE MADE ANSWER. 'SAY I'VE COME—IN TIME!'"

"Why do you want me to understand?" he said, his voice very low.

She quivered at the question, making no attempt to answer, just weeping silently there in his hold.

He leaned towards her, albeit he was trembling with weakness. "Puck, listen!" he said. "I do understand."

She caught her breath and became quite still.

"Listen again!" he said. "What is done—is done; and nothing can alter it. But—your future is mine. You have forfeited the right to leave me."

She uncovered her face in a flash to gaze at him as one confounded.

He met the look with eyes that held her own. "I say it," he said. "You have forfeited the right. You say I am free. Am I free?"

She nodded, still with her eyes on his. "I have—no claim on you," she whispered, brokenly.

His hands tightened; he brought her nearer to him. "And when that dream of yours comes true," he said, "what then? What then?"

Her face quivered painfully at the question. She swallowed once or twice spasmodically, like a hurt child trying not to cry.

"That's—nobody's business but mine," she said.

A very curious smile drew Merryon's mouth. "I thought I had had something to do with it," he said. "I think I am entitled to part-ownership, anyway."

She shook her head, albeit she was very close to his breast. "You're not, Billikins!" she declared, with vehemence. "You only say that—out of pity. And I don't want pity. I—I'd rather you hated me than that! Miles rather!"

His arms went round her. He uttered a queer, passionate laugh and drew her to his heart. "And what if I offer you—love?" he said. "Have you no use for that either, my wife—my wife?"

She turned and clung to him, clung fast and desperately, as a drowning person clings to a spar. "But I'm not, Billikins! I'm not!" she whispered, with her face hidden.

"You shall be," he made steadfast answer. "Before God you shall be."

"Ah, do you believe in God?" she murmured.

"I do," he said, firmly.

She gave a little sob. "Oh, Billikins, so do I. At least, I think I do; but I'm half afraid, even now, though I did try to do—the right thing. I shall only know for certain—when the dream comes true." Her face came upwards, her lips moved softly against his neck. "Darling," she whispered, "don't you hope—it'll be—a boy?"

He bent his head mutely. Somehow speech was difficult.

But Puck was not wanting speech of him just then. She turned her red lips to his. "But even if it's a girl, darling, it won't matter, for she'll be born on the right side of the safety-curtain now, thanks to your goodness, your generosity."

He stopped her sharply. "Puck! Puck!"

Their lips met. Puck was sobbing a little and smiling at the same time.

"Your love is the safety-curtain, Billikins darling," she whispered, softly. "And I'm going to thank God for it—every day of my life."

"My darling!" he said. "My wife!"

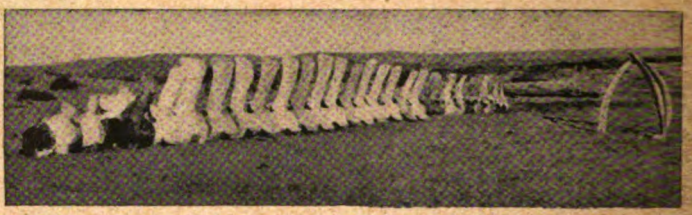
Her eyes shone up to his through tears. "Oh, do you realize," she said, "that we have risen from the dead?"

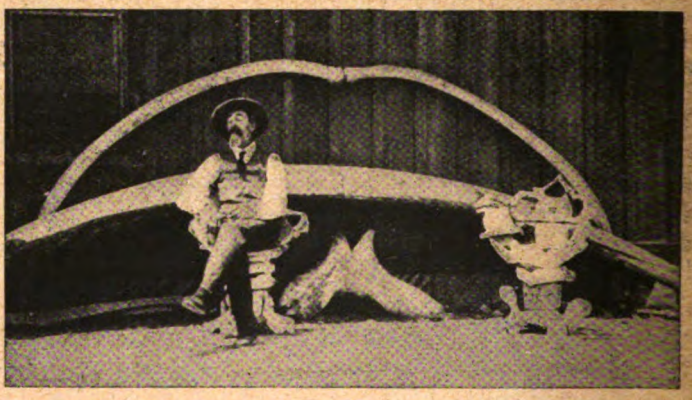
THE END.

CURIOSITIES.

[We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.]

FURNITURE FROM SKELETONS.





THE queerest trade yet! The old gentleman here seen makes furniture from old bones, and it is rather attractive furniture, too, although the sections of ribs and vertebræ are not disguised by upholstery or other covering. They are not carved or otherwise beautified, simply cleaned and polished; but the odd shapes of the bones, when arranged in symmetrical lines, give the appearance of elaborate work with the chisel. The raw material for this unique furniture is found in the shape of stranded bones or even skeletons of whales, which may be seen, as here shown, on the sands of the Pacific Coast. The old gentleman, who was photographed in a whale-bone chair of his own make, collects these fragments and turns them into comfortable and picturesque seats for the porch, lawn, or den. The parts are held together by iron rods and bolts, so that this furniture is exceptionally solid and heavy. This cabinet-maker in a strange material lives near Redondo, one of the coast towns, where a whale can be sighted occasionally, and after a storm he may be seen scanning the beaches for fresh material for his workshop. — Mr. C. L. Edholm, Wyoming, Rhode Island, U.S.A.

CONGRATULATIONS!

THIS is what sometimes happens in America to the happy couple on their return from the honeymoon—that is, if they have plenty of friends, for such attentions are a proof of popularity. A California butcher who has assumed the wedded yoke found his shop front completely covered with inscriptions in white chalk, and a huge "Just Married" sign above the door. The remarks written upon the shop were more jovial than witty, such as "Poor Butch," "We told you so," "Why did I do it?" and much more to the same effect. The modest home had not been forgotten either, and when the happy couple tried to slip into the front door in the dark they tripped upon three old shoes that had been nailed to the porch, and on examining the premises the following morning found that a festoon of discarded footwear had been tacked in artistic fashion at the entrance of their little nest.

BRIDGE PROBLEM.

By Ernest Bergholt.

Hearts—Ace, 7, 4, 3.
Clubs—6.
Diamonds—King.
Spades—King.

Hearts—None.
Clubs—10.
Diamonds—9, 7.
Spades—Queen, 7, 6, 5.

B
Y Z
A

Hearts—King, 10.
Clubs—None.
Diamonds—Queen, knave.
Spades—10, 9, 4.

Hearts—8.
Clubs—Knave.
Diamonds—Ace, 10.
Spades—Ace, knave, 8.

Clubs are trumps, and A has the lead. A and B are to win all the seven tricks against any possible defence.

(Solution will be published in next month's issue.)

ong & Absorbing stalment of **Conan Doyle's** History of the Briti Campaign in Franc

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

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PURE BREAKFAST COCOA
See Page 22.

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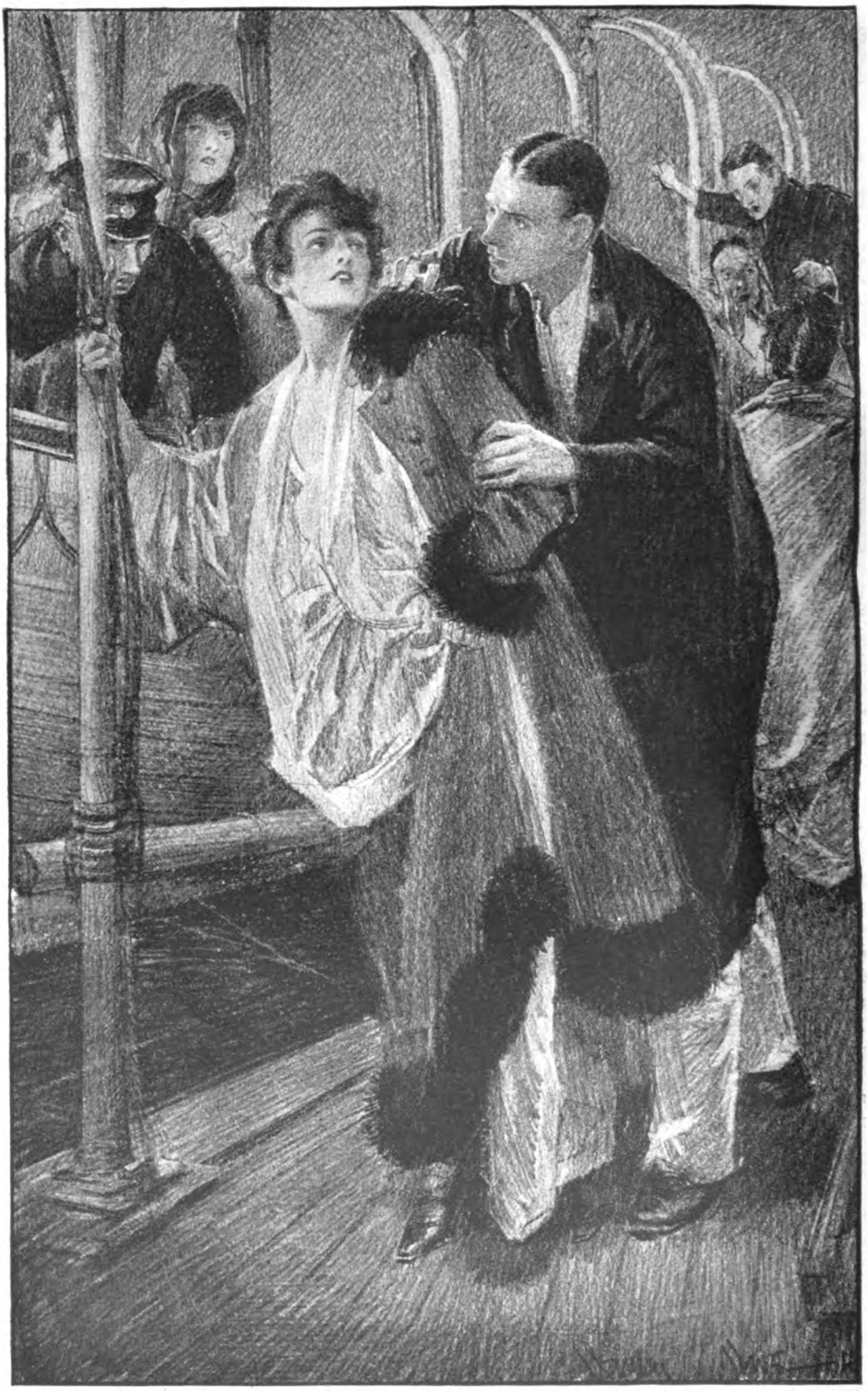

"'AS GINGER'S WIFE, YES,' I MUTTERED; 'AS THE CURSED SPY I KNOW YOU TO BE, NO—A THOUSAND TIMES NO!'"

(*See page 274.*)

THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

SEPTEMBER, 1916.
Vol. 52. No. 309.

SPUD TREVOR OF THE RED HUSSARS.

By "SAPPER."

Author of "The Lieutenant and Others" and "Sergeant Michael Cassidy, R.E."

Illustrated by Stanley Davis.

IT would be but a small exaggeration to say that in every God-forsaken hole and corner of the world where soldiers lived and moved and had their being before Nemesis overtook Europe the name of Spud Trevor of the Red Hussars was known. From Simla to Singapore, from Khartoum to the Curragh, his name was symbolical of all that a regimental officer should be. Senior subalterns, guiding the erring feet of the young and frivolous from the tempting paths of night clubs and fair ladies to the infinitely better ones of hunting and sport, were apt to quote him. Adjutants had been known to hold him up as an example to those of their flock who needed chastening for any of the hundred and one things that adjutants do not like—if they have their regiment at heart. And he deserved it all.

I, who knew him as well, perhaps, as anyone; I, who was privileged to call him friend, and yet in the hour of his greatest need failed him; I, to whose lot it has fallen to vindicate the slur on his name, state it in no half-hearted way. He deserved it, and a thousand times as much again. He was the type of man beside whom the ordinary English gentleman—a so-called white man—looked dirty-grey in comparison. And yet there came a day when men who had openly fawned on him left the room when he came in, when whispers of an unsuspected yellow streak in him began to circulate, when senior subalterns no longer held him up as a model. Now he is dead, and it has been left to me to vindicate him. Perchance by so doing I may wipe out a little of the stain of guilt that lies so heavy on my heart; perchance I may atone, in some small degree, for my doubts and suspicions; and perchance, too, the whitest man that ever lived may, of his understanding and knowledge, perfected now in the Great Silence to which he has gone, accept my tardy reparation and forgive. It is only yesterday that the document, which explained everything, came into my hands. It was sent to me sealed, and with it a short covering letter from a firm of solicitors stating that their client was dead—killed in France—and that according to his instructions they were forwarding the enclosed, with the request that I should make such use of it as I saw fit.

To all those others who, like myself, doubted I address these words. Many have gone under; to them, I venture to think, everything is now clear. Maybe they have already met Spud in the great vast gulfs where the mists of illusion are rolled away. For those who still live he has no abuse—that incomparable sportsman and sahib—no recriminations for us who ruined his life. He goes farther and finds excuses for us; God knows we need them. Here is what he has written. (The document is reproduced exactly as I received it—saving only that I have altered all names. The man whom I have called Ginger Bathurst, and everyone else concerned, will, I think, recognize themselves. And, *pour les autres*—let them guess.)

In two days, old friend, my battalion sails for France; and now, with the intention full formed and fixed in my mind that I shall not return, I have determined to put down on paper the true facts of what happened three years ago; or, rather, the true motives that impelled me to do what I did. I put it that way, because you already know the facts. You know that I was accused of saving my life at the expense of a woman's when the *Astoria* foundered in mid-Atlantic; you know that I was accused of having thrust her aside and taken her place in the boat. That

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accusation is true. I did save my life at a woman's expense. But the motives that impelled my action you do not know, nor the identity of the woman concerned. I hope and trust that when you have read what I shall write you will exonerate me from the charge of a cowardice vile and abominable beyond words, and at the most only find me guilty of a mistaken sense of duty. These words will only reach you in the event of my death—do with them what you will. I should like to think that the old name was once again washed clean of the dirty blot it has on it now; so do your best for me, old pal, do your best.

You remember Ginger Bathurst? Of course you do. Is he still a budding staff officer at the War Office, I wonder, or is he over the water? I'm out of touch with the fellows in these days. (*The pathos of it. Spud out of touch—Spud, of all men, whose soul was in the Army.*) One doesn't live in the back of beyond for three years and find Army lists and gazettes growing on the trees. You remember also, I suppose, that I was best man at his wedding when he married the Comtesse de Grecin. I told you at the time that I was not particularly enamoured of his choice, but it was *his* funeral; and with the old boy asking me to steer him through I had no possible reason for refusing. Not that I had anything against the woman—she was charming, fascinating, and had a pretty useful share of this world's boodle. Moreover, she seemed extraordinarily in love with Ginger, and was just the sort of woman to push an ambitious fellow like him right up to the top of the tree. He, of course, was simply idiotic; he was stark, raving mad about her; vowed she was the most peerless woman that ever a wretched being like himself had been privileged to look at; loaded her with presents which he couldn't afford, and generally took it a good deal worse than usual. I think, in a way, it was the calm acceptance of those presents that first prejudiced me against her. Naturally, I saw a lot of her before they were married, being such a pal of Ginger's, and I did my best for his sake to overcome my dislike. But he wasn't a wealthy man—at the most he had about six hundred a year private means—and the presents of jewellery alone that he gave her must have made a pretty large hole in his capital.

However, that is all by the way. They were married, and shortly afterwards I took my leave big-game shooting and lost sight of them for a while. When I came back Ginger was at the War Office and they were living in London. They had an extremely nice flat in Hans Crescent, and she was pushing him as only a clever woman can push. Everybody who could be of the slightest use to him sooner or later got roped in to dinner and was duly fascinated.

To an habitual onlooker like myself the whole thing was clear, and I must quite admit that much of my first instinctive dislike—and dislike is really too strong a word—evaporated. She went out of her way to be charming to me, not that I could be of any use to the old boy, but merely because I was his great friend; and, of course, she knew that I realized—what he never dreamed of—that she was paving the way to pull some really big strings for him later.

I remember saying good-bye to her one afternoon after luncheon, at which I had watched with great interest the complete capitulation of two generals and a well-known diplomatist.

"You're a clever man, Mr. Spud," she murmured, with that charming air of taking one into her confidence with which a woman of the world routs the most confirmed misogynist. "If only Ginger——" She broke off and sighed—just the suggestion of a sigh; but sufficient to imply—lots.

"My lady," I answered, "keep him fit; make him take exercise—above *all things* don't let him get fat. Even you would be powerless with a fat husband. But, provided you keep him thin and never let him decide anything for himself, he will live to be a lasting monument and example of what a woman can do. And warriors and statesmen shall bow down and worship, what time they drink tea in your boudoir and eat buns from your hand. Bismillah!"

But time is short, and these details are trifling. Only once again, old pal, I am living in the days when I moved in the pleasant paths of life, and the temptation to linger is strong. Bear with me a moment. I am a sybarite for the moment in spirit; in reality—God! how it hurts!

> Gentlemen rankers out on the spree,
> Damned from here to eternity.
> God have mercy on such as we.
> Bah! Yah! Bah!

I never thought I should live to prove Kipling's lines. But that's what I am—a gentleman ranker, going out to the war of wars—a private. I—and that's the bitterest part of it—I, who had, as you know full well, always, for years, lived for this war, the war against those cursed Germans! I knew it

"'YOU'RE A CLEVER MAN, MR. SPUD,' SHE MURMURED."

was coming—you'll bear me witness of that fact—and the cruel irony of Fate that has made that very knowledge my downfall is not the lightest part of the little bundle Fate has thrown on my shoulders. Yes, old man, we're getting near the motives now; but all in good time. Let me lay it out dramatically; don't rob me of my exit—I'm feeling a bit theatrical this evening. It may interest you to know that I saw Lady Delton to-day; she's a V.A.D., and did not recognize me, thank Heaven!

(Need I say again that Delton is not the name he wrote? Sufficient that she and Spud knew one another *very well* in other days. But in some men it would have emphasized the bitterness of spirit.)

Let's get on with it. A couple of years passed, and the summer of 1912 found me in New York. I was temporarily engaged on a special job which it is unnecessary to specify. It was not a very important one, but, as you know, a gift of tongues and a liking for poking my nose into the affairs of nations had enabled me to get a certain amount of more or less diplomatic work. The job was over, and I was merely marking time in New York waiting for the *Astoria* to sail. Two days before she was due to leave, and just as I was turning into the doors of my hotel, I ran full tilt into Von Basel—a very decent fellow in the Prussian Guard—who was seconded and doing military attaché work in America. I'd met him, off and on, hunting in England—one of the few Germans I know who really went well to hounds.

"Halloa, Trevor!" he said, as we met. "What are you doing here?"

"Marking time," I answered. "Waiting for my boat."

We strolled to the bar, and over a cocktail he suggested that if I had nothing better to do I might as well come to some official ball that was on that evening. "I can get you a card," he remarked. "You ought to come; your friend Mrs. Bathurst—Comtesse de Grecin that was—is going to be present."

"I'd no idea she was this side of the water," I said, surprised.

"Oh, yes. Come over to see her people, or something. Well, will you come?"

I agreed, having nothing else on, and as he left the hotel he laughed. "Funny, the vagaries of Fate. I don't suppose I come into this hotel once in three months. I only came down this evening to tell a man not to come and call as arranged, as my kid has got measles—and promptly ran into you."

Truly the irony of circumstances! If one went back far enough, one might find that the determining factor of my disgrace was the quarrel of a nurse and her lover which made her take the child another walk than usual, and pick up infection. Dash it all! you might even find that it was a spot on her nose that made her do so, as she didn't want to meet him when not looking at her best! But that way madness lies.

Whatever the original cause, I went; and in due course met the Comtesse. She gave me a couple of dances; and I found that she, too, had booked her passage on the *Astoria*. I met very few people I knew, and, having found it the usual boring stunt, I decided to get a glass of champagne and a sandwich and then retire to bed. I took them along to a small alcove where I could smoke a cigarette in peace, and sat down. It was as I sat down that I heard from behind a curtain which completely screened me from view the words "English Army" spoken in German. And the voice was the voice of the Comtesse.

Nothing very strange in the words, you say, seeing that she spoke German, as well as several other languages, fluently. Perhaps not; but you know what my ideas used to be—how I was obsessed with the spy theory; at any rate, I listened. I listened for a quarter of an hour, and then I got my coat and went home; went home to try and see a way through just about the toughest proposition I'd ever been up against. For the Comtesse—Ginger Bathurst's idolized wife—was hand-in-glove with the German Secret Service. She was a spy—not of the wireless installation up the chimney type, not of the document-stealing type, but of a very much more dangerous type than either—the type it is almost impossible to incriminate.

I can't remember the conversation I overheard exactly; I cannot give it to you word for word; but I will give you the substance of it. Her companion was Von Basel's chief, a typical Prussian officer of the most overbearing description.

"How goes it with you, Comtesse?" he asked her, and I heard the scrape of a match as he lit a cigarette.

"Well, Baron; very well."

"They do not suspect?"

"Not an atom. The question has never been raised even as to my national sympathies except once; and then the suggestion—not forced or emphasized in any way—that, as the child of a family who had lost everything in the '70 war, my sympathies were not hard to discover was quite sufficient.

That was recently, at the time of the Agadir crisis."

"And you do not desire *revanche?*"

"My dear man, I desire money. My husband with his pay and private income has hardly enough to dress me on."

"But, dear lady, why, if I may ask, did you marry him? With so many others for her choice, surely the Comtesse de Grecin could have commanded the world?"

"Charming as a phrase, but I assure you that the idea of the world at one's feet is as extinct as the dodo. No, Baron; you may take it from me he was the best I could do. A rising junior soldier, employed on a staff job at the War Office, *persona grata* with all the people who really count in London by reason of his family, and, moreover, infatuated with his charming wife." Her companion gave a guttural chuckle; I could feel him leering. "I give the best dinners in London; the majority of his senior officers think I am on the verge of running away with them, and when they become too obstreperous I allow them to kiss my—fingers.

"Listen to me, Baron," she spoke rapidly, in a low voice, so that I could hardly catch what she said. "I have already given information about some confidential big howitzer trials which I saw; it was largely on my reports that action was stopped at Agadir; and there are many other things—things intangible in a certain sense—points of view, the state of feeling in Ireland, the conditions of labour, which I am able to hear the inner side of in a way quite impossible if I had not the *entrée* into that particular class of English society which I now possess. Not the so-called smart set, you understand, but the real ruling set—the leading soldiers, the leading diplomats. Of course, they are discreet——"

"But you are a woman, and a peerless one, *chère* Comtesse. I think we may leave that cursed country in your hands with perfect safety. And sooner perhaps than even we realize we may see *der Tag*."

Such, then, was briefly the conversation I overheard. As I said, it is not given word for word—but that is immaterial. What was I to do? That was the point which drummed through my head as I walked back to my hotel; that was the point which was still drumming through my head as the dawn came stealing in through my window. Put yourself in my place, old man. What would you have done?

I, alone of everyone who knew her in London, had stumbled by accident on the truth. Bathurst idolized her, and she exaggerated no whit when she boasted that she had the *entrée* to the most exclusive circle in England. I know; I was one of it myself. And though one realizes that it is only in plays and novels that Cabinet Ministers wander about whispering State secrets into the ears of beautiful adventuresses, yet one also knows in real life how devilish dangerous a really pretty and fascinating woman can be—especially when she's bent on finding things out and is clever enough to put two and two together.

Take one thing alone, and it was an aspect of the case that particularly struck me. Supposing diplomatic relations became strained between us and Germany—and I firmly believed, as you know, that sooner or later they would; supposing mobilization was ordered—a secret one; suppose any of the hundred and one things which would be bound to form a prelude to a European war—and which at all costs must be kept secret—had occurred; think of the incalculable danger a clever woman in her position might have been, however discreet her husband was. And, my dear old boy, you know Ginger!

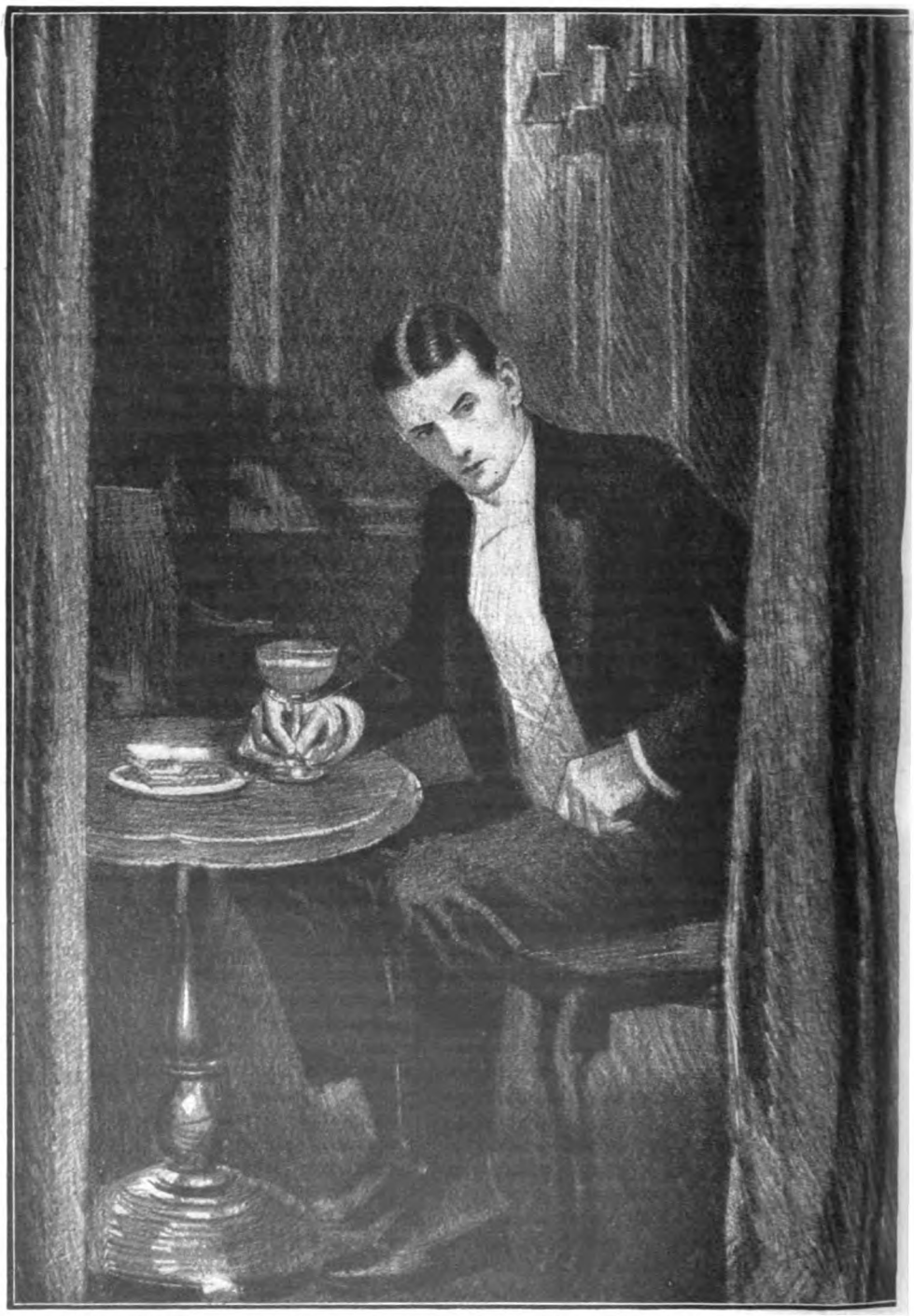
Supposing the Expeditionary Force were on the point of embarkation. A wife might guess their port of departure and arrival by an artless question or two as to where her husband on the staff had motored to that day. But why go on? You see what I mean. Only to me at that time—and now I might almost say that I am glad events have justified me—it appealed even more than it would have, say, to you. For I was so convinced of the danger that threatened us.

But what was I to do? It was only my word against hers. Tell Ginger? The idea made even me laugh. Tell the generals and the diplomatists? They didn't want to kiss *my* hand. Tell some big bug in the Secret Service? Yes—that, anyway; but she was such a devilish clever woman that I had but little faith in such a simple remedy, especially as most of them patronized her dinners themselves.

Still, that was the only thing to be done; that, and to keep a look-out myself, for I was tolerably certain she did not suspect me. Why should she?

And so, in due course, I found myself sitting next her at dinner as the *Astoria* started her journey across the water.

I am coming to the climax of the drama, old man; I shall not bore you much longer. But before I actually give you the details of what



"'LISTEN TO ME, BARON,' SHE SPOKE RAPIDLY, IN A LOW VOICE. 'I HAVE ALREADY

occurred on that ill-fated vessel's last trip I want to make sure that you realize the state of mind I was in and the action that I had decided on. Firstly, I was convinced that my dinner partner—the wife of one of my best friends—was an unscrupulous spy.

GIVEN INFORMATION ABOUT SOME CONFIDENTIAL BIG HOWITZER TRIALS WHICH I SAW.'"

That the evidence would not have hung a fly in the court of law was not the point; the evidence was my own hearing, which was good enough for me. Secondly, I was convinced that she occupied a position in society which rendered it easy for her to get hold

of the most invaluable information in the event of a war between us and Germany.

Thirdly, I was convinced that there would be a war between us and Germany.

So much for my state of mind. Now for my course of action.

I had decided to keep a watch on her, and, if I could get hold of the slightest incriminating evidence, expose her secretly but mercilessly to the Secret Service. If I could not, and if I realized there was danger brewing, to inform the Secret Service of what I had heard, and—sacrificing Ginger's friendship if necessary, and my own reputation for chivalry—swear away her honour, or anything, provided only her capacity for obtaining information temporarily ceased. Once that was done, then face the music, and be accused, if needs be, of false swearing, unrequited love, jealousy—what you will. But to destroy her capacity for harm to my country was my bounden duty, whatever the social or personal results to me.

And there was one other thing, and on this one thing the whole course of the matter was destined to hang: *I alone could do it, for I alone knew the truth.* Let that sink in, old son; grasp it, realize it, and read my future actions by the light of that one simple fact.

I can see you sit back in your chair and look into the fire with the light of comprehension dawning in your eyes; it does put the matter in a different complexion, doesn't it, my friend? You begin to appreciate the motives that impelled me to sacrifice a woman's life. So far so good. You are even magnanimous. What is one woman compared to the danger of a nation?

Dear old boy, I drink a silent toast to you. Have you no suspicions? What if the woman I sacrificed was not innocent? What if she was the Comtesse herself? Does it surprise you? Wasn't it the God-sent solution to everything?

Just as a freak of Fate had acquainted me with her secret, so did a freak of Fate throw me in her path at the end. . . .

We hit an iceberg, as you may remember, in the middle of the night, and the ship foundered in under twenty minutes.

You can imagine the scene of chaos after we struck—or, rather, you can't! Men were running wildly about shouting; women were screaming; and the roar of the siren bellowing forth into the night drove people to a perfect frenzy. Then all the lights went out, and darkness settled down like a pall on the ship. I struggled up on deck, which was already tilting up at a perilous angle, and there, in the mass of scurrying figures, I came face to face with the Comtesse. In the panic of the moment I had forgotten all about her. She was quite calm, and smiled at me, for of course our relations were still as before.

Suddenly there came the shout from close at hand, "Room for one more only!" What happened then happened in a couple of seconds; it will take me longer to describe.

There flashed into my mind what would occur if I were drowned and the Comtesse were saved. There would be no one to combat her activities in England, she would have a free hand. My plans were null and void if I died. I must get back to England—or England would be in peril. I must pass on my information to someone—for I alone knew.

"Hurry up—one more!" Another shout from near by; and, looking round, I saw that we were alone. It was she or I.

She moved towards the boat, and as she did so I saw the only possible solution—I saw what I then thought to be my duty; what I still consider—and, God knows, that scene is never long out of my mind—what I still consider to have been my duty. I took her by the arm and twisted her facing me.

"As Ginger's wife, yes," I muttered; "as the cursed spy I know you to be, no—a thousand times no!"

"My God!" she whispered. "My God!"

Without further thought I pushed by her and stepped into the boat, which was actually being lowered into the water. Two minutes later the *Astoria* sank, and she went down with her. . . .

That is what occurred that night in mid-Atlantic. I make no excuses, I offer no palliation; I merely state facts.

Only had I not heard what I did hear in that alcove she would have been just—Ginger's wife. Would the Expeditionary Force have crossed so successfully, I wonder?

As I say, I did what I still consider to have been my duty. If both could have been saved, well and good; but if it was only one, it *had* to be me, or neither. That's the rub—should it have been neither?

Many times since then, old friend, has the white, twitching face of that woman haunted me in my dreams and in my waking hours. Many times since then have I thought that—spy or no spy—I had no right to save my life at her expense—I should have gone down with her. Quixotical, perhaps, seeing she

was what she was; but she was a woman. One thing, and one thing only, I can say. When you read these lines I shall be dead; they will come to you as a voice from the dead. And as a man who faces his Maker I tell you, with a calm certainty that I am not deceiving myself, that that night there was no trace of cowardice in my mind. It was not a desire to save my own life that actuated me, it was the fear of danger to England. An error of judgment possibly; an act of cowardice—no. That much I state, and that much I demand that you believe.

And now we come to the last chapter, the chapter that you know. I'd been back about two months when I first realized that there were stories going round about me. There were whispers in the club; men avoided me, women cut me. Then came the dreadful night when a man, half-drunk, in the club accused me of cowardice point blank, and sneeringly contrasted my previous reputation with my conduct on the *Astoria*. And I realized that someone must have seen. I knocked that swine in the club down; but the whispers grew, I knew it. Someone had seen, and it would be sheer hypocrisy on my part to pretend that such a thing didn't matter. It mattered everything; it ended me. The world—our world—judges deeds, not motives, and even had I published at the time this document I am sending to you, our world would have found me guilty. They would have said what you would have said had you spoken the thoughts I saw in your eyes that night I came to you. They would have said that a sudden wave of cowardice had overwhelmed me, and that, brought face to face with death, I had saved my own life at the expense of a woman's. Many would have gone still farther, and said that my black cowardice was rendered blacker still by my hypocrisy in inventing such a story; that first to kill the woman and then to blacken her reputation as an excuse showed me as a thing unfit to live. I know the world.

Moreover, as far as I knew then—I am sure of it now—whoever it was who saw my action did not see who the woman was, and therefore the publication of this document at that time would have involved Ginger, for it would have been futile to publish it without names. Feeling, as I did, that perhaps I should have sunk with her; feeling, as I did, that—for good or evil—I had blasted Ginger's life, I simply couldn't do it. You didn't believe in me, old chap; at the bottom of their hearts all my old pals thought I'd shown the yellow streak; and I couldn't stick it. So I went to the colonel and told him I was handing in my papers. He was in his quarters, I remember, and started filling his pipe as I was speaking.

"Why, Spud?" he asked, when I told him my intention.

And then I told him something of what I have written to you. I said it to him in confidence; and when I'd finished he sat very silent.

"Good God!" he muttered, at length. "Ginger's wife!"

"You believe me, colonel?" I asked.

"Spud," he said, putting his hands on my shoulders, "that's a rotten thing to ask me—after fifteen years. But—it's the regiment." And he fell to staring at the fire.

Aye, that was it! It was the regiment that mattered. For better or for worse, I had done what I had done, and it was my show. The Red Hussars must not be made to suffer; and their reputation would have suffered through me. Otherwise, I'd have faced it out. As it was—I had to go; I knew it. I'd come to the same decision myself.

Only now, sitting here in camp with the setting sun glinting through the windows of the hut, just a Canadian private under an assumed name, things are a little different. The regiment is safe; I must think now of the old name. The colonel was killed at Cambrai, therefore you alone will be in possession of the facts. Ginger, if he reads these words, will perhaps forgive me for the pain I have inflicted on him; let him remember that though I did a dreadful thing to him—a thing which, up to now, he has been ignorant of—yet I suffered much for his sake after. During my life it was one thing; when I am dead his claims must give way to a greater one—my name.

Wherefore, I, Patrick Courtenay Trevor, having the unalterable intention of meeting my Maker during the present war, and therefore feeling, in a measure, that I am, even as I write, standing at the threshold of His Presence, do swear before Almighty God that what I have written is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So help me, God.

The fall-in is going, old man. Good-bye.

MY SONGS, PARTS, AND AMBITIONS.

By

ETHEL LEVEY.

Photo. Bassano.

MAFEKING night! You remember it, of course? The crowds that surged through the streets! The flag-wagging, fireworks, and illuminations! The shouts and cheers of the thousands intoxicated with mad enthusiasm for Sir Robert Baden-Powell, who had so magnificently defended the tiny town with his small garrison!

Clubs and restaurants were packed. Theatres and music-halls were "House Full." Boisterous, rollicking crowds shouted for their favourite artistes. Nervously and anxiously I listened to the audience as I stood in the flies at the Tivoli Music-hall on that night of May 18th, 1900.

It was the night of my *début* on this side of the Atlantic. For "one night only," the late Mr. Adney Payne, one of the kindest of men, had given me an engagement to see "how I went." And this was the night of the momentous trial. Not that I had any doubts or lack of confidence regarding my own powers, if I may say so without undue egotism. I had had too much experience on the "other side" to feel nervous on that score, although, for a reason I will explain later, I had, up to that time, met with very little encouragement from managers in London when searching for an engagement. But I must candidly confess that I was scared when I noticed the list of artistes on the bill. Marie Lloyd, Vesta Tilley, Vesta Victoria, George Robey, Harry Randall, Little Tich, R. G. Knowles—what a list!

The audience positively shrieked for them, while poor little me, quite unknown, stood awaiting their verdict. No wonder I shivered. And just when I seemed to be losing the last shred of courage I possessed, someone smacked me on the back and said, cheerily:—

"All right, girlie! Keep your pecker up!"

I turned round, and there was Marie Lloyd's laughing face and twinkling eyes. It was just the tonic I needed, and it was characteristic of the good-humoured generosity of the cleverest of female vaudeville artistes that, noticing how doleful and nervous I was, she should thus endeavour to cheer me up.

My number went up, and I walked on to the stage. There was a discouraging silence as I began to sing a song on the lines of "My Dear Little Girlie, Girlie," which, by the way, was originally my song, but which

I afterwards gave to Mr. R. G. Knowles, who numbers it among his best "hits."

I could not grip the audience, however. They were inattentive, and any artiste who has had that experience knows what a despairing feeling it causes.

Candidly, the audience did not like the song, and I nearly got what the gallery calls "the bird." I finished as quickly as possible and began a burlesque of comic opera.

It was the turning-point. The audience was silent for a minute or two, and then they began to laugh—moderately at first, the applause ultimately swelling into that whole-hearted approval which tells the artiste at once that she has struck the right note.

At the end of the burlesque I was quite satisfied with my reception, and when Mr. Adney Payne rushed round to the dressing-room with a contract for twenty weeks at thirty-five pounds a week, I felt that I had —to quote the popular expression—"made good."

London audiences and managers have since got to know me better, but never did applause sound so sweet as on Mafeking night.

I have said that I did not receive much encouragement from London managers in those early days. The reason was this. I had plenty of offers to sing songs, but, with the perverseness of woman, I did not want to entertain the public in the manner in which managers judged they wished to be entertained. I wanted to entertain them in the way *I* thought they ought to be entertained. I wanted to show them what I could do as an actress in comedy and drama. But managers would have none of it.

Visions of triumphs as Juliet and Ophelia floated through my mind. I idolized Mary Anderson, Sarah Bernhardt, Ellen Terry, and Eleonora Duse, whom I consider the greatest actress of her time. I aspired to vie with that wonderful actress, Miss Lily Brayton, as Katherina, in "The Taming of the Shrew." The *rôle* of Lady Macbeth, too, fascinated me, while I paid humble homage to the cleverness of George Bernard Shaw, and sighed for a chance to appear in some of his plays. As for Ibsen, I still want to try Nora in "A Doll's House." So you see my ambitions soar very high.

"Ethel," said my friends, when I spoke of these visions, "you might just as well ask for the moon!"

Recently I met Mr. Charles Cochran, the popular manager of the Ambassadors and the Empire, who has managed everything in the theatrical entertaining and sporting line, from wrestlers, boxers, and performing animals, to spectacular plays like "The Miracle" and the most popular, up-to-date revues. I remember he had a little office in the Strand in those days. He was acting as my agent at the time, and obtained for me various introductions to managers, including the late Mr. Charles Morton of the Palace and Mr. Frank Glenister of the Pavilion. They were not, however, impressed with my trial "turns."

Mr. Cochran recalled the days when we wandered from one manager to another in the hope of an engagement, and we laughed over my early dreams. He recalled the emphatic remark of one manager, who, when he heard of what I had been doing and what I wanted to do, said:—

"My dear girl, you are mad—mad as a hatter! Give us your songs, your dances, and your burlesque. But, for heaven's sake, for your own sake, for the sake of the public, and for the sake of the poor unfortunate manager, don't try to be serious!"

I took his advice, but in spite of the generous recognition which London audiences have accorded me in the various revues in which I have appeared since "Hullo, Ragtime!" at the Hippodrome, I am still dissatisfied. I love revue work, I love singing, dancing, and burlesque. I feel that one is doing much—particularly in these days of distressing trouble, if one can bring a little gaiety into the lives of the people. But I do want to see what I can do in serious plays. Maybe there will be a chance when the popularity of the revue is on the wane (of which there certainly seems no danger at the present time). An actress cannot always exist on meringues and trifles.

You may remember that in "Hullo, Tango!" which followed "Hullo, Ragtime!" at the London Hippodrome, I introduced a burlesque of the wicked Countess Ziska of "Diplomacy," in a fearful and wonderful mustard-yellow and emerald-green dress and decorations. It may seem conceited on my part to say so, but I really thought I made a success of that burlesque because I was more than usually interested in the character in the real play. As a matter of fact, I could have played in "Diplomacy" when it was revived at Wyndham's. But, quite apart from my existing contracts, I thought it a mistake to try to realize one's ambition in a piece in which so many famous artistes had already appeared. It seemed to me that when Mrs. Bancroft, Mrs. Bernard

ETHEL LEVEY AT THE AGE OF THREE—

else. It is a fact, particularly in regard to America, that when a woman learns to sing and kick her heels about and do light stuff like burlesque and revues, the public won't let her do anything else. That is one of the reasons why I came to London, hoping to make a change in my work.

At one time I wanted to go in for opera, and spent more money than I could really afford on my voice. Then, when it partly gave way, I took to dancing; but I don't think I shall ever be really satisfied until I have an opportunity of seeing what I can do on the legitimate stage.

In any case, there is no harm, is there, in building castles in the air? I have been doing it for many years—in fact, ever since I was a little girl. I still stick to my favourite motto, however: "Do what there is to do to-day, and leave to-morrow to take care of itself."

Woman-like, however, I am determined to have the last word in this matter of going on the legitimate stage. Women invariably do manage to get the last word, and I pay honest tribute to the lady with the deaf and dumb husband who, when he tried to explain matters during a tiff with finger Beere, and Miss Olga Nethersole had appeared in the part, it would be presumption for a beginner like myself to start in that *rôle*.

At the same time, it always seems to me a great pity that when one has created, as it were, a certain type of work, the public won't let you do anything

FIVE—

AND TEN.

fireworks, put out the light and thus maintained the reputation of our sex for finality.

I remember as a child, however, I always had great stage ambitions. Perhaps it was the air of 'Frisco, where I was born. It does have an extraordinary and exhilarating effect on some people! It was certainly responsible for the "hustle" which my friends say will kill me one of these days. One of them describes me as the "hundred horse-power worker." But work will never kill me. In case anything should happen, however, which makes it necessary to call for the coroner, tell him it was ambition, and not heart disease!

It was ambition that got me into trouble at school and led me, before I was seventeen, to run away from authority in the shape of teachers to go on the stage.

It happened in this way. I was attending a boarding-school in 'Frisco at the time. One day I sang at a friend's house when Mr. Thomas Riley, who, curiously enough, is in London at the present time, managing "Hobson's Choice" at the Apollo, was present. Mr. Riley was then Charles Hoyte's manager. He complimented me, and told me I ought to go on the stage. My parents, however, had other views. A wilful girl, however, like a wilful man, must have her way. The consequence was that in spite of parental objections and warnings, I seized an opportunity which presented itself, and made my *début* at the Columbia Theatre in Charles Hoyte's comedy, "A Milk White Flag."

It was rather a blow to my parents, for, although my mother cherished a hope that I might go into classic opera, she had a strong dislike to the ordinary stage. Consequently, I came to be regarded somewhat

as the bad girl of the family. However, a reconciliation took place, when I justified the belief in me which Mr. Riley had so kindly expressed.

By the way, mention of Mr. Riley reminds me that, twenty years ago, Mr. Gus Sohlke, who has produced Mr. Stoll's latest revue, in which I appeared—"Look Who's There" at the London Opera House—appeared on the bill with me in my first variety engagement in Chicago. What a small world it is!

ETHEL LEVEY WHEN FOURTEEN YEARS OLD.

I remember that the singing of my first song, "Go to Sleep, Ma Little Piccaninny," contributed not a little to whatever success I achieved in "A Milk-White Flag." You remember the song, perhaps? It has been warbled by millions of mothers throughout the world to their little ones, and I always feel proud of the fact that I was the first to sing it on the stage.

I have sung many popular songs since, notably "Pride of the Prairie, Mary," "Down in Jungle Town," "Billy," "Waltz Me Around Again, Willie," and "Rings on Her Fingers, Bells on her Toes"; while although the ragtime craze, with which I was first so prominently connected, is on the wane, the public have not yet forgotten "Alexander's Ragtime Band," "Hitchy-Koo," "Everybody's Doing It," and "Waiting for the Robert E. Lee."

It always struck me that one of the most striking tributes to the popularity of ragtime music was when, for the first time in the history of England, it was played at the opening of Parliament three years ago. I well remember the enthusiasm which was aroused as the band of the Dragoon Guards marched down Whitehall to the tune of "Alexander's Ragtime Band." It set every head wagging to the strains of:—

Oh, ma honey, oh, ma honey!
Better hurry and let's meander.

Far from pleasant, however, are my memories of another popular song which I used to sing entitled "Unrequited Love."

"What is the use of loving a girl, if the girl don't love you?" was the theme of the song. For five years I was singing it, until one night a man, occupying a box in the theatre at which I was appearing, shot himself. From the evidence afterwards revealed it appeared that he had resolved to commit suicide because the woman he wished to marry preferred somebody else. The newspapers were screaming with the tragedy for several days, and I got unenviable advertisement. Shortly afterwards, at a

AGE SEVENTEEN — A PORTRAIT TAKEN A YEAR OR TWO BEFORE HER FIRST APPEARANCE IN ENGLAND.

Pressmen's dinner in New York, when certain American journalists entertained a number of English *confrères*, the menu, which was in the form of miniature pages of the *New York Times* and the London *Times*, contained, by a curious coincidence, an extract of the report of the tragedy, and I was among the artistes engaged for the entertainment of the guests!

I have never sung the song since, and was painfully shocked when I heard that it had led to another tragedy in this country, the admirer of a well-known soubrette, who was singing the song at one of the halls here, shooting himself because of a hopeless infatuation.

I am afraid I cannot tell you any harrowing stories of my early days. Mr. Hoyte considered I was worth thirty-five dollars (or seven pounds a week), and after remaining with his company for a season I had my first experience of New York at Webber and Field's music-hall on the Broadway.

It was there that I first met my husband, Mr. George M. Cohan. Shortly after our

IN "WATCH YOUR STEP."
Photo. Foulsham & Banfield.

IN "HULLO, TANGO!"
Photo. Illustrations Bureau.

marriage we took out our own company, and played through the principal cities in the States. I not only played various parts in his many productions, but also helped to produce and design the dresses.

Paris, however, had always attracted me, and receiving an offer from the management of the Théâtre Michel, I accepted it and played in a one-act drama by Guitry, with the famous tragedian De Max. At the conclusion of this engagement, I appeared in a German revue in Vienna at the Apollo Theatre, and later in Berlin. I ultimately returned to Paris, and it was while singing at the Olympia Theatre that I first saw King Edward, who was then Prince of Wales. He came into the box while I was on the stage singing an American song with French words called "How Would You Like to be Me?" I had heard that he was coming to the theatre, and although I was not actually nervous, I must admit that I felt a curious sensation, difficult to describe, when he entered the box. I dared not look at him, thinking it best to keep my eyes firmly fixed on the audience. And I afterwards heard that His Majesty laughingly told the management that it was the first time that he had been treated with such marked inattention!

Curiously enough, within three weeks of King Edward's visit to the Olympia, three other Kings—Leopold of Belgium, the late King of Portugal, and King Alfonso of Spain, all came to see the performance—not to mention the Sultan of Zanzibar.

My first important London engagement was at the Alhambra under Mr. Alfred Moul's management, and after another visit to Paris and Vienna I ultimately settled down to revue work at the London Hippodrome in "Hullo, Ragtime!" "Hullo, Tango!" and "Watch Your Step!" at the Empire.

I am afraid I have little to relate regarding my experiences in these revues, except to express my appreciation of the many kindnesses received at the hands of the managers and my gratitude to London audiences.

There was one occasion, however, when I do not seem to have impressed my audience with what terpsichorean ability I possess. I happened, with half-a-dozen other well-known dancers, to be rehearsing for the All Fools' Ball at St. John's Wood.

A gentleman who was endeavouring to make, amongst other things, cotillon out of chaos, led me forward and showed me a few steps of a new dance. I immediately understood the idea and pleased him no end, so that after a time I was complimented.

"Quite an apt little dancer," was his description of me, "and with a little training she might get on the stage."

But I can sympathize with him, for there was an occasion when I certainly felt like an April fool myself. I was once awakened at dead of night by plaintive whines coming from my drawing-room, and then a number of notes were struck on the piano.

I am not usually a "nervy." person, but when, on bravely entering the room and turning up the lights, I saw no one there and heard not a sound, I began to feel shivery. Then, no sooner had I left the room and shut the door again, than there was a terrific din.

With the exception of my maid, who had also been awakened by the unusual noise, I was alone in the house. Neither of us dared to enter the drawing-room again, so we both sat, pale and trembling with cold and—well, yes—with fright, until morning. We heard the discordant notes played on the piano about a dozen times at intervals.

Daylight appearing, I walked into the drawing-room again, the maid following me with chattering teeth. Just as I reached the piano, a most frightful shriek came from its interior, and several of the notes were played with invisible hands. My maid fainted on the spot.

Determined to get to the bottom of the mystery, I wrenched open the top of the piano and saw, what do you think? A poor, half-starved little kitten!

Later on I heard that the mischievous little son of a visitor who had called the day before had put the kitten in the piano and shut the lid.

May I add that I have just one other ambition—or, rather, weakness—shared by many other members of my sex—viz., to dress artistically. I should not be a woman if I did not possess this little feminine vanity. I set great value on good dress, and certainly consider it unjust that a woman should be characterized as extravagant because she endeavours to look her best. The worst of it is that so many women make the mistake of being eccentric and immodest in their attempts to secure greater attraction. I fancy I can hear some readers exclaiming:—

"Fancy Ethel Levey, an actress who has worn more extraordinary gowns on the stage than any other woman in London, writing like that about fashions and dressing!"

Quite so, "on the stage." But you must remember that dressing for the stage is an altogether different matter from dressing for the street, drawing-room, or the restaurant. Everything is accentuated on the stage.

To my mind Englishwomen have made enormous progress in the art of dressing themselves during the past few years. When I came over from the States fluffy hair, big hats, and very inartistic frocks were all the rage. The spirit of originality seemed to be dead. In those days anything out of the common was sufficient to cause a sensation, and I well remember how I was stared at in a London restaurant one day because I appeared in a costume which was *not* the fashion! Now there are so many well-gowned women in London that astonishment is only manifested when a person goes beyond the limits of good taste. Yes, the Englishwomen have at last come into their kingdom as the best-dressed women in the world, and the only danger lies, as I have suggested, in the tendency, here and there, to slavishly follow ideas which are not for the betterment of art in dressing.

The House at Bath.

By ROLAND PERTWEE.

Illustrated by E. S. Hodgson.

THERE was a letter lying on Lord Louis Lewis's breakfast-table, written in a thin, straggling hand which wavered up and down as though the writer had been sore put to it to hold the pen. The writing was unfamiliar, and Lord Louis, as he broke the seal, wondered mildly who was his correspondent. The letter ran :—

DEAR LOUIS,—*I do not expect that you will remember me, as we have only met once, and you, at the time, were five years old. Possibly you heard your mother mention her Cousin Mary, although it is equally possible she did nothing of the kind ; for I made no attempt to keep in with the family, whom I found both tiresome and snobbish and, on the rare occasions when they called on me, significantly disposed to be sycophantic.*

I should not be writing now were it not that I am about to die, and when dead will be unable to conduct my own affairs.

It appears, from what I have heard, you are a moderately honest man, and sufficiently well off to be proof against covetousness. Accordingly, I have decided to make you my executor.

Unless you decide to ignore this letter, you will visit me and hear my wishes some day before Tuesday next. If you delay until after that date you may stop away altogether, as I shall certainly expire during the small hours of Wednesday morning.—Yours truly, MARY ELIZABETH BRYANY.

Lord Louis read the letter twice. It bore an address in Bath. Vaguely he recalled a day, in early infancy, when his grandmother, with whom he was spending Easter, dressed him up in a suit of brown velveteen and a Toby collar and carried him off to visit a distant relative. He remembered how they drove there in a high Stanhope and had spent, for him, a torturing hour, unrelieved by cake or candy, in company with Cousin Mary. At the time she struck him as a person of advanced years, who sat bolt upright in a high-back chair and spoke in a voice of that hard quality which children fear and abhor.

Cousin Mary had ever stood aloof from the members of her family, obsessed by the belief that one and all coveted her very meagre worldly possessions. She never lost an opportunity of impressing on them her intention that no one should profit by her demise. The constant recurrence of this subject of conversation had by degrees driven off the last of her relatives, vowing that never again would they be cajoled into calling on her.

Lord Louis rose to his feet and touched the bell.

" I am going to Bath, Badger," he said to the butler who answered his ring. " Arrange for the limousine to be at the door in twenty minutes."

It was noon when the big car drew up before a tall and depressing-looking house in one of those old-world crescents so prolific in the city of Bath.

Lord Louis mounted the steps and knocked gently, and a moment later the door was opened by a little middle-aged woman, dressed in a gown of rusty *glacé* silk, whose hair was drawn in a tight knot at the back.

" Are you Lord Louis Lewis ? " she inquired, with the nervous inflection of one unaccustomed to the use of titles. He bowed, and she added, " My name is Lavinia Brooker. Miss Bryany's companion. Will you step inside ?—it's this way."

Lord Louis followed the frail little figure down a dark and dingy hall, to which clung the faint odours of the Regency period.

Lavinia opened a door and admitted him to a dimly-lit room with half-drawn blinds.

From a corner in the shadows came a voice.

" Hey ! Come, have you ? Go away, Brooker, don't want you." The voice sounded like dry twigs breaking.

Confronting Lord Louis, in the same high-back chair which impressed itself on his infant memory, sat a very old lady. Her face, deeply seamed and furrowed, was set in an expression of permanent disapproval. Her thin, blue-veined hands rested twitchingly on her lap. On her head was a lace cap and a shawl of the same was about her shoulders and fell in folds over the heavy black brocade

of her dress. She was quite immobile save only for her eyes, which darted hither and thither like the tongue of a snake.

Suspended to the wall, behind where she sat, was an ivory figure of Christ upon a cross of ebony.

After the darting eyes had looked him up and down many times, she spoke.

"You didn't lose much time in coming."

"I came at once," he replied; "judging by your letter you had need of me."

"Yes. I shall die the day after to-morrow. Sit down—sit down! You get on my nerves standing there." He took a chair in silence. "I have no money to leave," she crackled, observing how readily he obeyed her order, "so you needn't be polite in any false hope of gain."

Lord Louis was justly nettled. "It is natural to some of us to be polite, Cousin Mary," he said, "as it is natural to others to be the reverse."

Miss Bryany chuckled. "Good—good!" she said. "Now listen to me. I have an annuity of two hundred a year which will end with me on Tuesday night."

Lord Louis interrupted to ask what made her so sure of dying at that exact time.

"I ought to know," she returned. "I leave this room every evening at nine o'clock, and each night the effort of getting to bed nearly kills me. My strength is running out, and I know just how long it will last. Therefore I say with certainty I shall die on Tuesday night. Beyond the annuity I have nothing, except this house and what it contains. After my funeral everything is to be sold. The undertaker is to be paid out of the money realized. A twelve-pound-ten funeral. Whatever money remains is to be spent in erecting a monument over my grave. If the sale is properly managed there ought to be nearly three thousand pounds."

"Cousin Mary," said Lord Louis, "twelve pounds ten is a very small price for a funeral, whereas three thousand is a great deal to spend on monumental masonry. The division appears unequal."

"Intentionally," replied Miss Bryany. "My relatives won't be able to see an expensive coffin, but the monument would exist as a lasting source of irritation to them."

Lord Louis resisted the temptation to criticize adversely this uncharitable resolve, and merely asked if there was any particular style of architecture she desired to have followed.

Miss Bryany shook her head. "You can put a public-house over my grave, so long as the money is spent," she retorted; then, seeing his expression of disapproval, added, "You are thinking it is a pity I don't leave it to you, eh?"

"My dear cousin," he replied, "I fear you have been denied a clear vision of my mental processes. Rest assured I in no way covet your property, having more than sufficient means of my own. On the other hand, I consider your intentions do you small credit."

Miss Bryany tucked up the corners of her nose and emitted some sounds which might have been intended for laughter.

"I like you, Louis," she said. "You are the first person who ever dared to stand up to me. The rest, when they came, which was seldom enough, thank the Lord, were too civil for my taste. Because they hoped my bits and sticks might come their way they lacked the pluck to speak up and say what they really thought of me. The fools! They might have profited if they had. I hate cowards and sycophants! You are not a coward, Louis, and I've a mind to make you my sole legatee."

"I trust you will do no such thing," he answered. "I have no possible claim to your bounty, whereas there are others who have."

"What others?"

"Your companion, Miss Brooker, for instance."

"Ta! Not a penny. She's the worst of the lot. One of the patient kind. Hasn't the spirit of a mouse. Been with me forty years and never flared up once. Puts up with anything. Besides, she's a Roman—can't endure Romans. I'll show you the sort she is." So saying Miss Bryany took a small hand-bell and rang it imperatively.

The door opened and Lavinia Brooker entered noiselessly.

"Yes, Miss Bryany?" she said.

"Brooker!" came from the old lady. "You are a fool, aren't you?"

Lavinia flashed, ever so slightly. "You have often said so," she replied.

"Then you say it, for a change. Say to Lord Louis here—say, 'Lord Louis, I'm a poor, mean-spirited fool.'"

The flush spread over Lavinia's features, nevertheless she opened her lips and would have obeyed had not Lord Louis interposed.

"Cousin Mary," he said, "your sense of humour and mine do not run on parallel lines. You put me in mind of a small boy crushing flies against the window-pane for sport."

Lavinia gasped. In all the forty years of their association she had never heard Miss

"'MY DEAR COUSIN,' HE REPLIED, 'REST ASSURED I IN NO WAY COVET YOUR PROPERTY, HAVING MORE THAN SUFFICIENT MEANS OF MY OWN.'"

Bryany addressed with such absolute candour. But to her amazement Miss Bryany only chuckled.

"A poor simile, Louis," she said, "for the small boy is protected by his strength."

"Whereas you are protected by your weakness," he replied, incisively.

Miss Bryany frowned a little. "You can go, Brooker," she said. "But wait outside. I shall want you to show Lord Louis round the house presently."

"And to think," said Lord Louis, when the door had closed, "the poor little thing has endured such treatment for forty years. Truly, some women are angels. Cousin Mary, if you were to leave ten times the value of your estate to Lavinia Brooker you would not have discharged a farthing in the pound of your debt to her."

But Miss Bryany only chuckled and diverted the topic.

"There's an inventory on that table," she said. "You are an expert on valuations, aren't you?"

"I can form a fair judgment on works of artistic merit," he replied.

"Then go round with Brooker and come and tell me what you put the value of the property at."

Lord Louis made a careful examination of all the house contained, jotting down his own valuations against the details in the inventory. He was astonished to find his Cousin Mary had considerably under-estimated her possessions, which he assessed at nearer six than three thousand pounds.

The greater portion of the examination was conducted in silence, but more than once he had occasion to comment on the very exact knowledge of the numbers and

classification shown by Lavinia Brooker of the objects he was inspecting.

Lavinia gave a wan smile. "I ought to know," she said. "We have a different day for each room, and once a week I have to bring down all the plate and china and count it over before Miss Bryany." Lord Louis's eyebrows inquired why. "She isn't strong enough to look them over herself and climb stairs," she explained, "and she says it keeps a hold on me. She thinks I might take something otherwise."

"Miss Brooker," said Lord Louis, "why do you put up with it?"

"She pays me fifteen pounds a year," came the answer.

Lord Louis stroked his nose reflectively. "What are your intentions when Miss Bryany has gone?"

Lavinia shook her head. "I just don't know, Lord Louis," she answered. "I am too old to get another place, I expect."

"Shall you have any private means of support?"

Again she replied, "I don't know." But her eyes asked him a mute question.

"I am afraid," said he, in answer to that silent appeal, "it is not Miss Bryany's intention to include any personal bequests in her will."

As they were returning to the room where Miss Bryany awaited them Lavinia, who several times had opened her lips as though to speak, suddenly took the courage to ask, "Lord Louis, did you notice a crucifix on the wall in there?"

"Yes. An ivory crucifix."

"I want to buy it for myself. I'm a Catholic, you know. It's a beautiful crucifix. For forty years I've said my prayers to it. Do you think it would fetch a great deal at the sale? I could spend six pounds five shillings, if necessary." The speech escaped from her in short, disjointed sentences, punctuated by nervous gasps. Lord Louis guessed, and guessed rightly, the six pounds

"'I LIKE YOU, LOUIS,' SHE SAID. 'YOU ARE THE FIRST PERSON WHO EVER DARED TO STAND UP TO ME.'"

and odd shillings she was willing to pay represented all her worldly goods. The savings of forty years at fifteen pounds a year. His heart warmed towards her.

"I will examine it carefully," he said. "In the meantime, will you be so good as to cast up the figures I have written against the details of the inventory and let me have the total."

Miss Bryany received the news that her property would realize double what she imagined without enthusiasm.

Lord Louis turned his attention to the crucifix. The figure of Christ was exquisitely carved in ivory—the modelling of the torso being some of the most remarkable he had ever encountered. On the head was a crown of thorns, fashioned in Chinese jade, and the cloth about the loins was stained a deep and ruddy brown, as also was the hair. Silver nails pierced the hands and feet, and where they punctured the skin tiny cabochon rubies were inset, glistening like drops of blood on dead-white flesh.

Instinctively he realized that here was a work of art far above the ordinary.

Miss Bryany's voice cut in upon his reflections.

"What do you think of it, Louis," she demanded.

"I think," he replied, "it would be an act of grace if you presented this crucifix to your little companion."

"Hum!" snapped Miss Bryany. "I shall do nothing of the kind. It 'ud be encouraging Romanism—and I hate Romans."

Lord Louis drew on his gloves. "I shall bid you good-bye," said he. "I have some arrangements to make at home. But I will return to-morrow and take up my quarters at the Mitre Hotel, in case there is anything you wish to discuss with me."

Lavinia Brooker spoke to him at the front door.

"Shall I be able to buy it for six pounds five shillings?" she asked.

"I am afraid," said he, "the crucifix is worth far more than that. It will probably fetch some hundreds at the sale."

Lavinia made no reply, but two large tears welled over her lower lids.

Lord Louis shook hands feelingly, and bade her farewell; while from the inner room came the insistent note of Miss Bryany's bell.

Lord Louis returned to Bristol and made arrangements to be away for a few days. On the following afternoon he drove back to Bath and ensconced himself at the Mitre Hotel. Before dining he paid a short visit to Miss Bryany, whom he found very uncommunicative. He detected a growing weakness in her bearing.

As he walked back to his hotel Lord Louis confessed to himself that she was probably right, and Wednesday morning would dawn on one soul the less.

At nine o'clock the same evening the following scene was enacted. Miss Bryany looked at the clock, then fired off the two words, "Bed, Brooker!"

Lavinia laid aside her crochet and there ensued the frightfully complicated proceeding of putting Miss Bryany to bed. At last it was over: the sheet tucked under the old lady's chin, the nightlight lighted, and the gas lowered. Then, from the bed, came the sound of Miss Bryany's voice, and very jerky it was.

"Needn't look so glum, Brooker. Only have to do it once more."

"Oh, Miss Bryany!" said Lavinia. "You know I wasn't thinking of that."

"What were you thinking, then?" Lavinia hesitated. "Come on!"

"Miss Bryany—I—you—Lord Louis told me what you intended doing with your things—and I've been wondering—I was going to ask whether——" She moistened her lips, "That crucifix—I would like to have bought it. Would you let me? I do so want it. If you would let me buy it now—before the sale, I mean. Upstairs in my box I have six pounds and a few shillings—I'd give it to you at once. It isn't very much, I know—and I'm sure the crucifix is worth more—but I thought perhaps you wouldn't mind that, seeing it was me."

"Seeing that it's you, eh, Brooker? That's good! Never did trust you, did I? I'm not going to begin now. Suppose you thought this a fine chance to get something on the cheap?"

"I am sorry," said Lavinia. "I offered you all I had. Good night, Miss Bryany."

"Shut the door. I've not done with you yet. Look here! did you do as I told you and take a room near-by to go to directly I have gone?"

"I took a little room in Chadwick Street."

"Then you can go there to-night."

"To-night?"

"Yes. I don't fancy having you prowling about among my things while I'm in no state to keep an eye on you."

"But, Miss Bryany——"

"You can come back in the morning. There are a couple of shillings in my purse yonder to pay for your bed and breakfast."

"WHAT HAVE YOU GOT IN THAT PARCEL?"

"You don't really mean me to go, Miss Bryany?"

"Get a nightdress and be off."

"I can't leave you alone in the house. Oh, Miss Bryany, you know I'd never touch anything."

"Not going to give you the chance. Get a nightdress and call in here for the florin before you go."

So strong is the habit of obedience that almost without realizing what she was doing, Lavinia found herself in her little bedroom making a parcel of her nightdress, sponge-bag, brush and comb.

Suddenly her eyes filled with tears—hot tears of resentment, and to herself she said, "It isn't fair."

Then she rose, put on her hat and cape, and placing the parcel beneath her arm descended the stairs. In the hall she halted—threw a glance towards Miss Bryany's door—then stole away to the back room and went down on her knees before the crucifix.

Five minutes later she was in Miss Bryany's room taking the florin from the purse on the dressing-table.

"What were you doing in the parlour?" demanded Miss Bryany.

"Saying my prayers," answered Lavinia.

A silence, then: "What have you got in that parcel?"

"My nightdress, a sponge-bag, and my brush and comb."

"Looks a big parcel. Sure there isn't anything else, Brooker?"

"I have told you there isn't," said Lavinia.

"Open that parcel, Brooker."

The corners of Lavinia's mouth began to work.

"I sha'n't open it—I won't open it."

"What d'ye say?"

Then of a sudden the flood-gates of the little companion's wrath gave way, and forty years of accumulated grievances and repression surged through her thin and quivering lips. And Lavinia Brooker, slave and servitor, stood up and spoke her mind as a free woman and a brave.

It was a long and bitter denunciation and finished with the words, "May your Master be kinder to you than you deserve." So saying she snatched up her parcel, ran from the room, and the front door banged behind her.

During the whole recital Miss Bryany had scarcely uttered a word. Once or twice, when for sheer lack of breath her accuser had stopped for a moment, she had interpolated "Go it!"; and had Lavinia been less obsessed with her own rhetoric she might have observed the same dancing light in the old lady's eyes which had appeared when Lord Louis attacked her sense of humour the day before.

After the front door closed Miss Bryany gripped the top sheet and painfully pulled

herself into a sitting posture. Arrived at which she laughed—actually laughed—and this time there was no mistaking the sound. Then, inch by inch, she lowered her feet to the ground and reached out for the ebony stick which stood by the bedside. After several unsuccessful efforts she managed to rise and five minutes later had subsided in a chair before a writing-table on the other side of the room.

Taking a pen and paper she wrote—very waveringly at first, but with gathering strength as she proceeded. When finished she read over what she had written.

"And now," she said, "for a witness."

The lower half of her window was open and thither she made her way, taking the hand-bell from the bedside table *en route*.

Lord Louis Lewis, having finished his dinner at the Mitre, was conscious of sensations of dyspepsia. Previous experience had taught him the surest method of combating this ailment was a short but brisk walk. Consequently, at a quarter after ten, he took his hat from the hall-stand and strode forth into the night.

One direction being as good as another he allowed his footsteps to lead him towards his Cousin Mary's abode. As he turned the corner of her street there came to his ears the sound of a bell repeated at short intervals. He accordingly hurried in the direction of the sound, and a moment later beheld the unusual spectacle of Miss Bryany herself framed in the opening of the street-level window. Seemingly she supported herself with great difficulty and only accomplished the ringing of the bell by a supreme effort.

"Good neavens!" said he, "what on earth are you doing?"

"Louis!" she croaked. "Lucky!—come inside—want you—climb over the sill—kill me to get round to the front door."

Entry by way of the window did not strongly recommend itself to Lord Louis. However, the necessity seemed urgent. With a glance up and down the street, to be sure he was not observed, he mounted the palings and scrambled within.

Miss Bryany had staggered back to the bed, on which she lay in a state of exhaustion. Lord Louis cast about for a restorative, and finding a bottle of peppermint administered a dose of considerable strength, which, accompanied by some sniffs from the smelling-salts, appeared to have a good effect.

After a while the old lady began a series of convulsions and vibrations which alarmed him not a little. Perceiving this she found the strength to say, "All right, Louis, I'm only laughing." Greatly relieved, he demanded the cause of her mirth.

"Because," said she, "Lavinia Brooker has come to life—she's a woman." And bit by bit the story of Lavinia's outburst was made known to him.

"She called me everything—she, of all people! Oh, Louis, it was worth baiting her for." A pause, then: "The paper—on the writing-table—read it, Louis."

Lord Louis crossed the room and took up a sheet of paper scrawled over in his cousin's hand.

It was the last will and testament of Mary Elizabeth Bryany, wherein she bequeathed all the moneys that should result from the sale of her property, real and personal, to Lavinia Brooker. There was one proviso, namely, that the legatee should be kept in ignorance of the fact until the sale was concluded.

Lord Louis read it through twice. He then turned to the bed.

"Cousin Mary," he said, with deep feeling, "I congratulate you."

"Stuff!" returned the old lady. "Witness the signature and put it in your pocket. And, Louis, you must tell her that I laughed—understand?"

When he had put away the paper, she said: "You can go now, Louis. Come and see me to-morrow—I sha'n't go till to-morrow."

But Lord Louis noticed a stealing greyness coming over the withered features. "Will you entrust me with a latchkey, then?" he asked.

"In my purse yonder," she replied, casting her eyes towards the dressing-table.

Lord Louis opened the purse and, with that curious photograph sense to which we are all susceptible at certain times, the contents of the purse impressed itself on his memory. Besides the latchkey were four farthings, a threepenny-bit, a piece of paper bearing an address, a broken crochet-hook, some pearl buttons, and a stamp, torn off an envelope apparently with the intention of using it again.

Putting the key in his pocket he bade his cousin a gentle "good night" and, as she made no reply, let himself quietly from the room.

Five minutes later he was ringing the night-bell of a house but a few streets away. Dr. Oliver had been kept at a late case and had not yet retired. Consequently but little time was lost before they arrived together on Miss Bryany's doorstep.

In Miss Bryany's room all was silent. The nightlight burned steadily in its little saucer of water, but the lamp of Miss Bryany's spirit had guttered out a few moments after Lord Louis bade her good night. She had thrown the last of her reserves into the field on Monday and there was nothing left for Tuesday's battle.

"I am afraid," said Lord Louis, "I have called you in vain."

Dr. Oliver made his examination and then withdrew.

"You are remaining, I suppose?" he inquired.

Lord Louis nodded. "For to-night," said he, shaking hands with the doctor.

At eight o'clock the following morning he heard the sound of a key turning in the front door. Stepping into the passage he laid a finger to his lips.

Lavinia Brooker started in surprise. "Is anything the matter?" she asked, and he nodded gravely. "I was afraid it would happen. Lord Louis, it is my fault, you know."

"She told me before she died." Lavinia turned away, and misinterpreting her movement he said, "Do not blame yourself, Miss Brooker; you had every provocation."

"Lord Louis," she answered, and her voice was extraordinarily steady, "I don't. That is what I can't understand. That is the worst part. I'm not sorry—I'm glad, even—and if she were alive now I wouldn't ask her forgiveness."

"Come, come!" said Lord Louis. "You do yourself less than justice in bearing resentment."

"Was *she* sorry, then?" asked Lavinia, with a touch of spirit. "Did *she* regret anything?"

"She said very little," he replied, eventually. "To tell you the truth, Miss Brooker, she laughed."

"Laughed?" echoed Lavinia. Then, "I see—she laughed."

"I would not have told you," he said, "but she insisted that I should."

"Everyone obeyed Miss Bryany," said Lavinia, with a cross between a sob and a laugh. "I would like to see her before I go."

"Before you go?"

"Yes. I was not to be allowed in the house after she had died."

Together they entered the silent bedroom. Miss Bryany lay with a fixed, sardonic smile on her features, as one who had passed with a joke between her lips. Lavinia shrunk back as though she had been struck, for the expression epitomized to her forty years of unkindliness. To fathom its true reason would have taken a finer perception than hers, and it was no part of Lord Louis's executorship to offer enlightenment.

"You will leave me your address?" he asked, when a little later he was standing beside Lavinia.

"I have a room at 14, Chadwick Street," she replied, "but I don't know how long I shall be able to stay there. Good-bye, Lord Louis."

He watched her until she was out of sight. A poor little derelict setting forth to brave great waters without a rudder and without a sail. He would have given much to have told her the truth, but the will of the deceased, be it right or wrong, is a sacred trust, and Lord Louis was a man of honour.

He determined, however, to lose no time in having the will proved and the property realized, conceiving that delay in this matter would mean something akin to starvation for Lavinia Brooker. In less than three weeks the legal affairs had been settled and notices of the sale appeared in the local newspapers and on the walls of Miss Bryany's house.

In the meanwhile Lavinia Brooker passed through days which were a positive nightmare of monotony. Besides the six pounds five shillings which represented her savings, she possessed about thirty shillings in cash from her last quarter's salary.

She put down her name on the books of an employment agency and gave herself over to brooding. She longed to be able to forgive Miss Bryany for her oppression and to ask forgiveness—to regain the tolerance and forbearance which for forty years had never been shaken.

On the fourth day she watched the funeral cortège pass the end of Chadwick Street. There was but one wreath, a gift, as she rightly guessed, from Lord Louis Lewis. He himself was riding alone in the one carriage which followed the hearse. When they had passed out of sight, Lavinia, acting on a sudden impulse, bought a few roses from a flower-seller and followed in the direction of the cemetery.

She arrived there just as the funeral was coming away on its return journey. She stood back in the shadow of the gates, and not until they had gone by did she emerge and make her way towards the spot she knew Miss Bryany had chosen for her last resting-place.

Already the diggers had begun to replace the earth, but they courteously withdrew at the approach of the belated mourner. She

did not stay long after a glance into the grave.

"I have brought you a few roses, Miss Bryany," she said, "but I don't believe I mean it—and I suppose you would only laugh if I did." Then she hurried away, ashamed to the core for having so spoken.

When she had returned to Chadwick Street and was sitting on the little bed with the broken spring mattress she reviewed her conduct dispassionately.

"I believe," she said, "if I could pray again before the ivory crucifix I might be changed. Oh, oh! I don't want to feel like this any longer."

She snuffled and rummaged in her bag for a handkerchief. Inside lay the key of Miss Bryany's house, which she had forgotten to return. She took it out and held it in her hand, while the cheap clock on the mantelshelf ticked out the minutes of her resolution.

It was a little after midnight when Lavinia silently admitted herself to the house which had been her home for so long. After closing the front door she halted breathlessly and listened. There was no sound, and, taking her courage in both hands, she made her way to the back room. The place was in utter darkness, but Lavinia could have threaded her way blindfold through any of the rooms, so indelibly was the arrangement of all the furniture imprinted on her mind.

She struck a match and applied it to a candle on the small table next to Miss Bryany's high-backed chair. When the flame steadied itself she began to absorb the familiar surroundings. Beside the candlestick lay her crochet, just as she had laid it aside when Miss Bryany dictated "Bed, Brooker," for the last time. The back of Lavinia's throat felt hot as she picked it up, and she experienced a sensation of chokiness. Then she turned her eyes towards the crucifix, spiritually white in its recess.

With a happy sound of recognition Lavinia went down on her knees.

When she had finished the dark places in her soul had vanished.

"I knew it would be all right if I came," she said.

On her way down the hall she turned for a moment into Miss Bryany's room. It was faintly illumined by the glow from a street lamp on the other side of the road. Very strange it seemed there should be no sound of breathing from the bed.

Lavinia crossed and laid a hand on the pillow.

"I am very, very sorry, Miss Bryany," she said.

Something glistening on the dressing-table caught her eye. It was a silver corner of Miss Bryany's purse.

Lavinia fumbled in her bag for the latchkey which had admitted her. "I'll put it in the purse," she said to herself—then hesitated. A thought ran through her brain that she might want to return just once more to bid farewell to the crucifix. And so Lavinia slipped out into the night, the house door key still in her bag.

A catalogue was made of the effects of the late Miss Bryany, and a neat red label tied to each piece of furniture and ornament; otherwise the house was left just as it was in normal times.

On the day preceding the sale the front door was opened and intending purchasers and curious neighbours flooded the premises. There were quite a number of dealers present who, though outwardly depreciating the value of the crucifix, inwardly determined to secure it at all costs.

In the late afternoon, when the crowd had somewhat diminished, Lavinia Brooker unostentatiously entered the house. By the exercise of the greatest control she had battled against the impulse to return again by night, but to-day the doors were open for the world to walk inside. The sight of so many people in those quiet passages and rooms, so unused to the sound of feet other than her own, caused her to shrink back abashed. She stepped aside into Miss Bryany's room to allow two dealers to pass.

"Not a bad crucifix at all," one of them was saying.

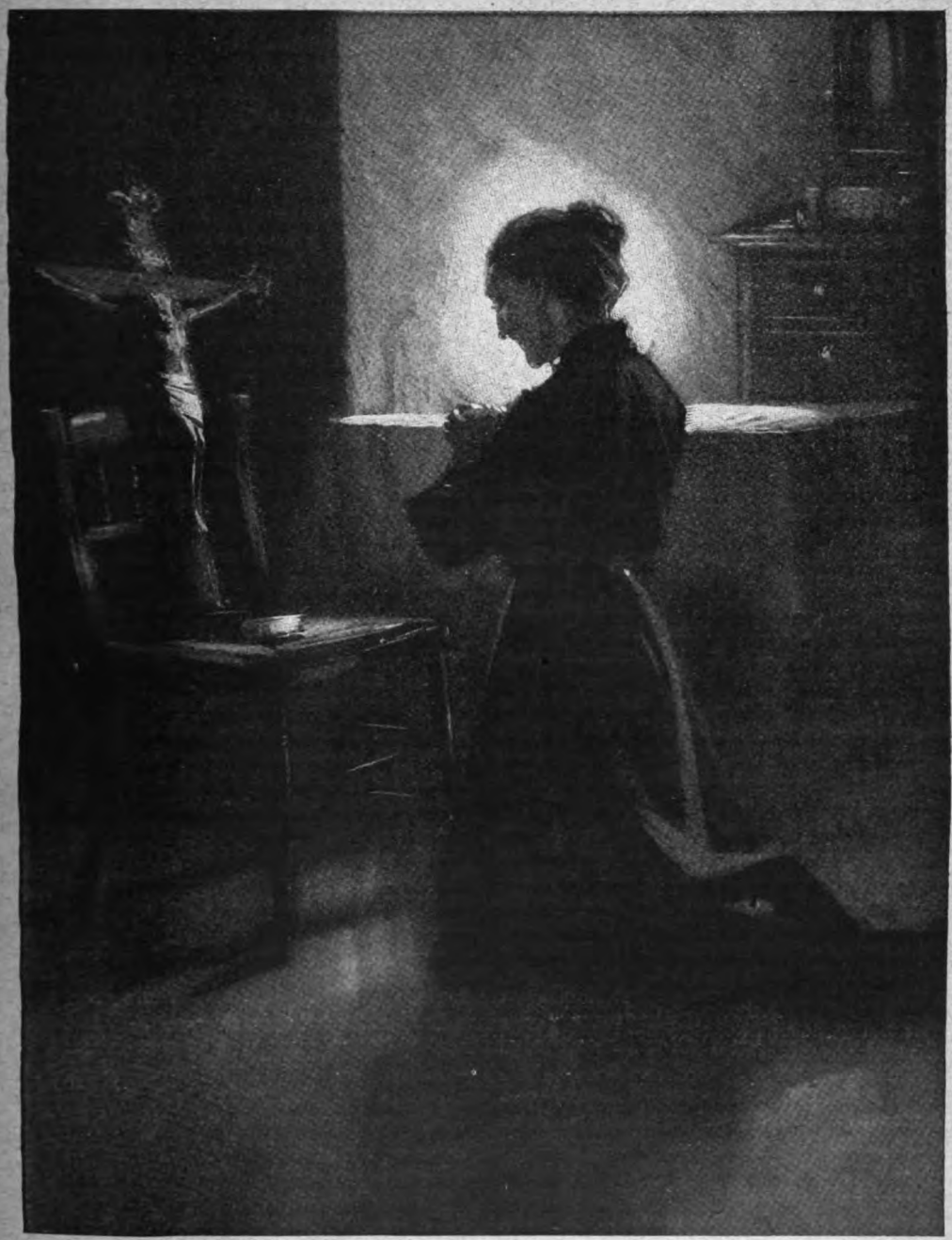
"Yes, but there's precious little market for that class of goods."

Lavinia shuddered. Her soul shrank at the thought of this beautiful thing being spoken of as so much merchandise.

She threw a final glance round Miss Bryany's room and noticed the old lady's purse still lying on the dressing-table, seemingly no one having thought fit to remove it.

"And now," she said, when her footsteps had taken her to the door of the back room, "for the last time."

A number of people had congregated before the crucifix, several of whom were afflicted with high-pitched voices. The babel of tongues was intolerable and jarred as hatefully as laughter in a church. She longed for silence to make her adieux to her old friend and comforter. Confidences were impossible in



"A SMALL WOMAN WAS ON HER KNEES BEFORE AN IVORY FIGURE UPON A CROSS OF EBONY."

all this noise, and she wished, cordially, she had never come.

Then the crowd parted and gave her a view of the ivory figure on the cross.

"Oh!" she gasped: and again "Oh!" For about the neck of the figure was a red label bearing the words "Lot 39." A hot flush of resentment surged to her cheeks and she started forward as though to snatch away the offending message. Then, in the midst of her impulse, she halted, wheeled about and hurried from the house, every fibre in her being crying out against the shame which had been done.

The sale was announced to begin at eleven-thirty on the following morning, and Lord Louis Lewis was one of the first arrivals. He was met in the hall by an excited clerk of the auctioneer's staff.

"Lot 39 has been stolen!" gasped the young man.

"My memory for detail is as good as most men's," replied Lord Louis, "but I cannot for the moment recall what Lot 39 may have been."

"The crucifix!" said the clerk; "and it was here when I locked up the house last night."

Lord Louis preserved his calm. "Has anything else been taken?" he demanded, and received a negative answer. "Are there any signs of a forcible entry having been made?"

The clerk shook his head. "What had I better do, my lord?" he inquired. "Inform the police?"

Lord Louis stroked his nose. "They would hardly be likely to recover it in time for the sale," he replied. "I think you had better leave the matter in my hands."

Outwardly unmoved, he entered Miss Bryany's bedroom.

"Now, I wonder who has taken it?" he said to himself; then added: "Poor Lavinia Brooker! I was going to buy that for you, and now the pleasure of the deed is lost to both of us."

His hand fell on Miss Bryany's purse, still lying on the dressing-table. It was of no conceivable value to anyone, and had not been included in any of the job lots of odds and ends. It occurred to him that the purse would form a little souvenir of his executorship of Cousin Mary's estate. Accordingly, he dropped it in the outer pocket of his coat and moved away to the drawing-room, where the voice of the auctioneer was already lifted in supplication.

The sale of Miss Bryany's house and effects realized a sum of six thousand three hundred and forty-four pounds nine shillings and twopence.

Lord Louis returned to his hotel and, after dining, penned a short note to Lavinia advising her of her sudden accession to the sum mentioned. He then took a cab and drove up the hill to Chadwick Street.

The door of No. 14 was opened by Lavinia's landlady, and Lord Louis desired her to deliver the letter at once.

"She's upstairs," responded the excellent woman. "Third landing—door on the right. Why don't you slip up and see her yourself? I can't go now, or the milk'll burn."

Accordingly, Lord Louis slipped upstairs, or, rather, walked up with his firm but quiet tread. As he approached the third landing he caught sight of a mirror which reflected an image through a half-open door. The image was of a small woman on her knees before an ivory figure upon a cross of ebony.

Lord Louis stopped to make sure his eyes did not deceive him. Then he turned about and descended the stairs.

In the hall he encountered the landlady.

"Did you see 'er?" she asked.

"No," he replied. "It occurred to me that as the hour is late my call might be inopportune. I must induce you to deliver the letter after all," and, pressing a half-sovereign upon her, he retreated from the house.

He walked slowly back to the hotel in a serious and reflective mood.

"It's up to you, Cousin Mary," he said. "It is you who made a thief of Lavinia Brooker—for lack of trusting her. But what a pity—what a pity!"

When emptying his pockets, before retiring to bed, he came across his cousin's purse. Although he remembered perfectly what was in it, he opened the catch and tipped out the contents into the palm of his hand. Four farthings, a threepenny-bit, some pearl buttons, the broken crochet-hook, the piece of paper, the stamp, and—six golden sovereigns, a five-shilling piece, and a latchkey.

Lord Louis looked at the collection in amazement before the truth dawned on his brain.

Lavinia Brooker might be a thief, but she had paid for what she stole with all her worldly goods—the savings of forty years at fifteen pounds a year.

His eyes were a trifle dim as he wrote her a letter explaining that a slight error had occurred in the amount he mentioned in his previous note, and that instead of her credit being six thousand three hundred and forty-four pounds nine shillings and twopence, there was actually a matter of six thousand three hundred and fifty pounds fourteen shillings and twopence due to her, which included the private sale of the crucifix omitted in the last statement.

HOW I ESCAPED FROM THE HUNS.

By

SERGEANT LETOR.

SERGEANT LETOR.

Amongst the most remarkable escapes on record must be classed that of a Frenchman, Sergeant Letor. Twice recaptured, tried, sentenced, punished, Letor at last succeeded in getting clear away from the enemy's country, and he is now back in France. He has here written the story of his extraordinary experiences.

WHEN the war broke out I was employed as a clerk. Mobilized on August 5th, 1914, the rank of sergeant was assigned to me in the 228th Regiment of Infantry. My regiment was in action for the first time on August 28th, at Guise, and it was in this battle that I was taken prisoner.

WEEKS OF DURANCE VILE.

The Germans formed us into two groups. Surrounded by sneering brutes, who taunted us incessantly with: "Paris—lost! Paris—lost!" we were conducted on foot to La Chapelle, where we remained three days. Then we were conveyed to Sennelager, in Westphalia, a wretched journey of seventy-two hours, in a rough cattle-truck, with just sufficient food to keep us alive—some vile soup and a pittance of bread.

Arrived at Sennelager, we were enclosed upon a piece of ground encircled with barbed wire. At night we had only one covering between two of us. We slept on the bare earth, without the slightest protection from wind and rain.

In order to have at least a dry sleeping-place, we constructed huts of earth, like those of negroes. It was not until we had been in the place three weeks that the authorities set about the erection of huge tents, capable of accommodating six hundred men. When, at last, on December 2nd we were housed in new barracks—huts built of wood—they appeared to us in that bitter weather (there was snow and an icy blast) palaces whose luxury exceeded all expectations. Only think of it! We were able to fill up the chinks of the planked walls with paper. And then we had mattresses! Actually three mattresses between five of us. Lastly, there were two hundred and fifty men in each hut, so we were not lonely and could talk to one another of France, of our families, of our hopes.

Incredible as it may appear, we were not in bad spirits. We found plenty of material for merriment, especially in the colossal "bluff"

of the Germans, who day by day informed us of their grand, decisive victories. Our food, too, was a perpetual provocative of mirth, prompting many jests. *What* food it was! Pickled sauerkraut, salted French beans, badly-cooked potatoes, rutabags (or "Swedish turnips," huge and pumpkin-coloured), barley, truly remarkable bread, composed of very fine sawdust, chopped straw, potato-parings, with the merest dash of rye-flour thrown in! We had just enough—and no more—of this meagre diet to prevent us from dying of starvation. We were now in February; the war continued; it was maddening to be a prisoner!—and then the idea of flight germinated in my brain, as in that of many others in like case.

SEEKING THE OPPORTUNITY.

March arrived. At this time it was decided to employ the prisoners on the farms and in the mills and mines of the neighbourhood. We were sent to Sickinmühle, a small place at a distance of several miles from our camp. Our task was that of clearing a wood. In order to uproot the tree-stumps, it was necessary to dig deep into the soil. A ray of light broke upon my mind.

My plan was simple. I took two comrades into my confidence. "I will place myself in a hole in the ground," I said to them; "then, while the sentry's back is turned, cover me with earth, and leave me to shift for myself."

As I rose from my bed on the morning of April 9th I felt, somehow, that the hour so greatly longed for had at last arrived. At 7 a.m. our party entered the wood. To each of my two friends I said, "Keep as near me as possible. I have made up my mind to chance it."

Then I proceeded as usual to dig and wrench out the stumps. I put on one side a slightly-hollowed tree-stump, thinking I might use it to keep off the earth from my face when covered. With the collection of a few roots and some bracken, my preparations were complete. I felt anxious and impatient. Should I succeed? Or was I, very stupidly, about to draw upon myself the fate of being shot like a dog?

Curiously enough, it was the dreaded sentry himself who unconsciously made my task easy!

BURIED ALIVE.

There had been much rain during the night, and the morning was chilly. The sentry on guard a few yards from the spot where I was working tried to kindle some roots and ferns into a blaze. The damp wood emitted such a smoke that I and my hole were almost hidden. Moreover, the sentry, blowing hard upon his fire, was evidently paying no attention whatever to the prisoners. I, perched on the brink of my hole, watched him intently.

Suddenly an immense volume of smoke, more dense than ever, issued from the pile of damp wood. Like a shot I jumped into the hole, drew my tree-root into the desired position, made a pad of fern-leaves, and placed it over my mouth. Then—I waited.

Only for a few seconds. My comrades seeing me disappear, hurriedly began to fill in the hole. The cold earth almost froze me. Presently I was buried to the shoulders. Now my friends would have only to throw some twigs and fern-roots over my head to prevent me from being suffocated; then I should have only to lie still until the workers had departed.

But, horror! Instead of twigs, I received upon my head an enormous mass of earth. It fell upon me so suddenly that I had barely time to shield my mouth and eyes with my hands. I was in total darkness; I struggled to draw breath. In literal truth, I was buried alive!

I learned later that the sentry had suddenly turned in my direction, and that my comrades had had no alternative but to act as they did in order to avoid detection.

And now my position became worse and worse. Interred at 8.45 a.m., I should have to remain in my grave until eleven-thirty. The earth was crushing me beneath its weight and freezing me with its cold. I wondered whether I was doomed to swoon and die in this hole.

Now and again my friends came near me and told me the time. Thus I learned at first that it was a quarter to ten o'clock; then that it was half-past ten; finally, that it was a quarter-past eleven. A few minutes afterwards I thought that my last hour had come. One of the German sentries actually *walked over me*, crushing my feet, legs, and body!

Fortunately, he did not step on my head, or it would indeed have been all over with me! For a minute or two I heard him discussing something with another German; then, to my unspeakable relief, he took himself off.

My nose was bleeding, I could only breathe in pants. Then I fainted.

I was recalled to my senses by a stinging, burning sensation in one of my hands. I had thrust my left hand out of the hole, and the sun was shining full upon it. My body was so thoroughly chilled that the sun's rays fell upon my flesh like a tongue of fire.

Restored to consciousness, I cautiously raised myself until my body was half-way out of the hole. Fifty yards away I saw my fellow-prisoners returning to their quarters. Quite close to me a German was surveying the amount of work accomplished. At length he took his departure.

With difficulty I freed myself completely; then I took off my cloak and my red trousers, retaining only the wretched garments supplied to me, as to all the prisoners, by the German military authorities.

All my limbs were so stiff and cramped that for some distance I was obliged to drag myself along on my knees. When I succeeded in standing upright, I reeled like a drunkard.

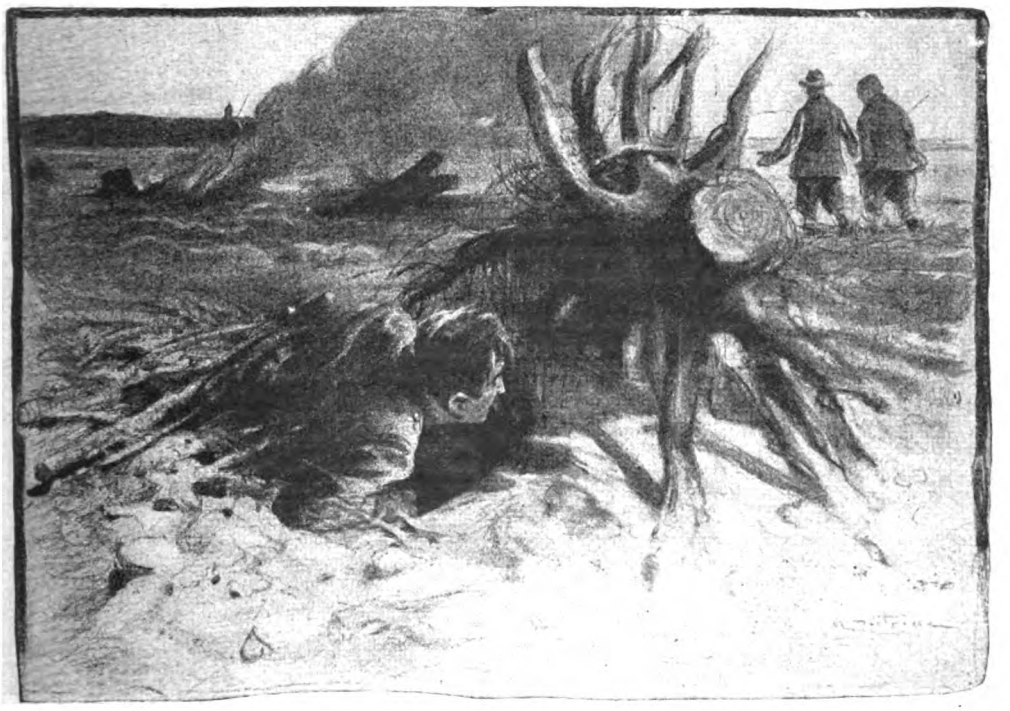
On the Marle Road, at a distance of some three hundred yards away, the German in command of the detachment halted for the

purpose of counting the prisoners. I had not a moment to lose.

I ran to the other side of the road where the ground was marshy and boggy. Then at once, in order to throw my pursuers off the scent, I diverged towards a mine in the opposite direction. I took care to let myself be seen by some peasants, then retracing my steps, I went through the woods in the direction of Holland. My sole guide was a small pocket-compass.

In adventures of this kind, a calm self-assurance is one of the conditions of success. I passed and came to Altern. It was one o'clock in the afternoon, and I felt faint with hunger.

Boldly and briskly I went through the town. One precaution I took which I hoped might deter people from questioning me. I drew a red handkerchief from my pocket, and blew my nose violently. I continued this performance all the time I was traversing the town. Nobody paid any attention to me, except one little girl, who stood staring at me for a moment, then suddenly disappeared within a gateway. My severe "cold" did not hinder my rapid progress



"RESTORED TO CONSCIOUSNESS, I CAUTIOUSLY RAISED MYSELF UNTIL MY BODY WAS HALF-WAY OUT OF THE HOLE." *Drawn from a sketch* [*by Sergeant Letor.*]

by the side of the farm where my former companions were, and perceived by the evident excitement that the alarm had been given. Already the Germans were searching for me. But where? That I would have given much to know. At a distance of half a mile or so flowed the River Lippe. To this I ran. Never having learned to swim, I had no choice but to cross by the bridge. As I was crossing, I perceived three Germans coming towards me. Would they recognize me as a fugitive prisoner? We met. They glanced at me; I passed them. Farther on a woman, with a child at her side, was laying out linen. I walked straight up to her. "*Guten morgen*," I said, in passing, as if I were an acquaintance. I went up to the child, and patted his cheek. He smiled at me; I passed on. I was passed by others Nobody interfered with me. For about half an hour I walked straight on, and I reached the open country in safety. Here there was a wood, where I took a brief repose.

Tormented by hunger, I searched my pockets for the sugar and chocolate which I had had the forethought to bring away with me. All had melted into an unappetizing mess, but my meal seemed to me excellent, and I rose refreshed. My first consideration was speed, my second secrecy. I drew off my boots, and walking barefoot through the woods, covered a distance of twenty-seven miles. By and by, after a spell of hard walking amidst briars, thorns, and felled trees, my feet were bleeding. All the same, I walked on. Now I came to the embankment of a railroad, along which I crawled, flattening myself as much as possible against the ground. When overtaken by darkness, I was in the midst of a bare region, and under a heavy downpour of rain.

In order not to lose my way, I was forced to remain where I was until dawn. At 5 a.m. I resumed my journey, and in a short time approached Borken, which is not far from the Dutch frontier. I took the prudent course of following the railroad. A train came along, and I had only just time to escape observation by flinging myself into a water-filled ditch.

When close to Borken, I put on my boots, and boldly took the high road. The wind had risen to a violent gale, and a woman who saw me buffeting it kindly invited me to take shelter in her house. Needless to say, I declined.

Upon entering the suburbs of Borken, the first person whom I met was a gendarme. He stared at me, but that was all. I bade him "Good day," and without flinching coolly walked past him.

But such luck was too good to last.

A "SPOIL-SPORT" CYCLIST.

On and on I tramped, taking no notice of my painful feet. I had travelled two miles since quitting Borken, when I observed in the near distance a boy and a cyclist. I turned aside into a wood, where I remained in hiding for half an hour.

I did not know that I had been seen by some field labourers, who had raised a hue and cry. Suddenly I heard behind me the familiar, unmistakable sound of a bicycle wheel. Swiftly the machine overtook me, and the cyclist jumped off.

"Your papers?" he demanded, curtly.

"I am Dutch; I have no papers."

As I made this reply a second cyclist, accompanied by a police dog, posted himself at my side. All the urchins of the neighbourhood came running to enjoy the spectacle.

I was beaten. For a moment I felt fiercely angry, angry at my failure, angry with myself. But immediately came the thought, "I am trapped this time, but *I will try again.*"

I *did* try again. When, how, we shall soon see.

I was taken to Rheda, and there confined in a cell while the officials at the Sennelager camp were informed by telephone of my capture.

IN THE WHITE CELL.

Two days later a couple of soldiers arrived to escort me back to the camp at Sennelager, where cell and court martial awaited me.

By order of General Gayl, commander-in-chief in Münster, I was at first subjected to very singular treatment. The barber of the camp shaved one side of my head and face completely; that is to say, the half of my hair on the right side, the right eyebrow, the half of my moustache, and the half of my beard. Thus, half hairy, half bald, I was dressed as if for a carnival, in a garment half blue, half red, gathered in with a red and white belt. A pair of enormous wooden shoes took the place of my ordinary footgear. When I beheld myself in such fantastic guise, I began to wonder whether I should ever be able to renew my attempt. But this harlequin-like attire was imposed on me only for a time.

On May 6th I was escorted to Dortmund where sat the court martial which was to try me. I was sentenced to three weeks of the "white cell," *i.e.*, a cell with a window to admit the daylight, and to a diet of bread and water. At night I had a plank and two coverings.

Incarcerated at Recklinghausen at the same time with five of my comrades, who, like me, had previously tried to escape, I was considered a "free prisoner." This formula means that the door of the cell may be open during the day.

I BEGIN AGAIN.

In this prison I remained until August 2nd, when I was sent back to Sennelager. On my arrival there, my first thought was how I might prepare for another flitting. Brousset (*caporal mitrailleur* of the 250th) had the same intention as myself. We began at once to save the chocolate, sugar, and some of the other contents of the parcels received from friends. In addition, we were able to procure at the canteen two Tyrolean knapsacks.

My compass had been confiscated at the time of my capture, but I had daringly "pinched" it from the examining officer's table at the court martial. It was indispensable. And now we—Brousset and I—decided to profit by the first opportunity.

It was the middle of August. The Sennelager camp was now in full working order, well organized, and strictly guarded. Picture to yourself an immense rectangle, four hundred and forty yards in length and two hundred and seventy-five in breadth, planted on a German drilling-ground. Some thirty wooden huts occupy the centre and three sides of the rectangle. Three barriers surround it. The first is a fence of barbed wire about eight feet in height. The second barrier, about seven feet beyond the first, is formed of wire charged with an electric current of ten thousand volts, mere contact with which would kill an ox. Seven feet beyond the second is barrier number three, exactly similar to the first. Beyond these three barriers is the circle of sentries, who, with loaded guns, follow one another at an interval of twenty yards. Such was our camp.

AT THE RISK OF BEING ELECTROCUTED.

On August 21st, 1915, Brousset and I decided to depart in the course of the following night. It was arranged that we should secrete ourselves in the lavatory near the enclosure about eight o'clock in the evening. Friends undertook to watch the sentries, and to announce their observations by whistling a popular tune. Should the sentry approach our retreat, the tune was to be "*V'là le Général qui passe*"; should he move in the opposite direction, and go farther away, it would be "*Y a d'la goutte à boire là-haut.*"

We had been in hiding for ten minutes when we heard very clearly the notes of the signal. It was the latter tune.

Slowly and cautiously we pushed open the door, and on hands and knees wriggled out

into the night. Brousset, who was to cut the barbed wire with a pair of pincers, went in front. I crawled behind him. Beyond the triple barrier we saw distinctly the figure of a sentry twenty yards to the right of us. Another was thirty yards to our left.

The coolness of Brousset was stupendous! He stopped. I could see his right arm move. I heard a click. The pincers had severed a wire. The click came again and again. Four times the pincers had bitten the wire. I could hear the beating of my heart.

But Brousset was moving on. The first difficulty had been overcome; now for the live wire! That was within our grasp, yet to touch it would have been death. But it did not lie upon the ground. Its cup-like supports were fixed in posts, and between it and the ground was a space of about eighteen inches. We crawled very, very slowly, flattening ourselves as much as we could. Brousset passed under in safety. It was now my turn.

I can truthfully affirm that I was perfectly calm as I crept beneath that murderous wire. Gripping the ground, I managed somehow to propel my body with my hands. Oh, those awful moments! My head got through—my shoulders—my back—and at last my whole body was safely on the other side!

Brousset's pincers were already at work upon the third barrier. Again I heard the clicks. The most difficult part of our task was accomplished. A few more creeping movements, and we should be outside the camp!

But when we *were* outside it, we were also out of the shadows, exposed to view, and the two sentries were scarcely twenty yards from us. Luckily, there was a little clump of bushes close by. Here we took refuge, and here we remained side by side without stirring until eleven o'clock. Then, as we could discern no sign of activity in the camp, we walked away. At first the ordnance-yard afforded us some shelter; afterwards, by way of the woods, we gained the hill.

In the morning we were early afoot. Two sportsmen caught sight of us, and started their dogs in our direction. I had some English pepper in one of my pockets. With this I made a sort of barrier beside a ditch. We leaped over the ditch and climbed to the very summit of the hill, where we remained concealed amongst the juniper trees for the rest of the day. A light repast of sugar and chocolate proved an aid to endurance.

At nightfall we set out again. After the hill came a series of woods and marshes, through which we travelled, avoiding the town of Rheine, and passing through that of Metelen half an hour after midnight. We were fortunate enough not to meet a living soul.

More marshes stretched themselves out before us in an apparently endless succession. It took us two days to traverse them. During the day we slept amongst reeds and rushes, partaking sparingly of our scanty provisions, which had to serve us for ten days. Some mangold-wurzels that we found, and devoured raw, enabled us to save the few tablets of concentrated milk which we desired to reserve as a last resource.

IF I HAD KNOWN.

After nine days of walking and privation, we arrived towards midnight at Ahaus, within a short distance of the small frontier town of Vreden. Again there were but a few kilometres between me and freedom. Would it elude us this time?

Alas, it eluded *me!* Quite suddenly, without any warning, we came upon a German custom-house station. We were seen. At once the alarm was given; soldiers pursued and fired at us. So great was my fatigue that I had not the strength to run. At the very instant that one of the soldiers fired upon me from behind (at a distance of less than five yards), I stumbled and fell. The bullet whistled in my ears. Seeing me fall, the man naturally concluded that I had been hit. Thus, while I feigned death, he, followed by his comrades, stepped over me and continued the pursuit of Brousset.

As soon as this pack of hounds had gone by, I rose, and hid myself in a thicket. Here I was on Dutch territory, but, unhappily, I was unaware of the fact. However, I thought myself already safe, until, half an hour later, I heard the tread of a patrol. Some minutes afterwards a ray from a powerful electric lamp flashed upon the bushes in close proximity to me. The Germans had returned, and finding that my body had gone, were now searching for me. With what anxiety I watched the movements of that tell-tale ray. Would it pass above my head, over or at the side of my bush? Suddenly I was blinded. The ray had struck me full in the face. I was discovered. Then I became aware that four soldiers were covering me with their guns. "Surrender, or we fire!" shouted a non-commissioned officer. I was trapped again!

I rose from my crouching posture and advanced towards the officer, who took me into custody. There were only four yards between my bush and the patrol. Coarse sneers and jeers greeted me, and I was astounded to hear these words, "It is most unfortunate for you, but you have just walked out of Holland."

One thing consoled me. Brousset had not been caught, and was now in safety.

THIS TIME IT IS THE BLACK CELL.

I can scarcely bear to recall the incidents of the days that followed. I was stunned, overwhelmed. On September 9th I re-entered Sennelager between two sentries. For the second time I appeared before the court martial, and received the following curious sentence: For having tried to escape, fourteen days of the black cell (without window); for having *looked on* while Brousset cut through the wire entanglements, another fourteen days of the black cell; and nine days of the white cell for having put the authorities to the trouble and expense of repairing the damage.

"All this will not deter me from trying again," I exclaimed.

The "black cell" was a sort of coffin, a wooden box without light or air, about seven feet in length, the same in height, and a little less in breadth. The food consisted of dry black bread and water.

My comment upon the verdict procured for me an additional penalty, of which, however, I knew nothing until the day when I emerged from my coffin. From October 17th, 1915, until the end of the war I was to be incarcerated in the prison of Recklinghausen. The Germans thought that they had found an effectual means of preventing me from trying again, and it must be confessed that the mere view of that prison was sufficient to discourage the boldest and most resolute of men.

A GERMAN PRISON.

The prison of Recklinghausen is situated in the northern portion of the Westphalian town of that name. It possesses but one advantage—from the fugitive's point of view—that of being no more than two hundred and seventy-five yards from the open country. Formed of high buildings, with connecting walls, it contains two hundred cells, of which some are large enough to accommodate several prisoners. Twenty armed sentries constantly patrol in the round-ways and outside the high outer wall. Numerous warders are on duty inside. Three officers are in command. Two professional watchmen and a police-dog, unchained at night, when he has the run of the courtyards, complete the personnel. A guard is posted on the first storey, a sentry watches on every landing of the staircase. Finally, in the courtyards sentries mount guard day and night.

There is in this prison just one alleviation—permission to leave one's cell during the day, to visit and converse with comrades. I soon made myself at home, and became especially friendly with five other prisoners: Adjutant Bienvenu, of the 119th of the line; Sergeant-Major Durupt de Baleine; two civilians, MM. Van Calster and Yves le Guen; and one other whom I will not name, because he is still in captivity.

We all had the same ardent desire—to escape. We quickly agreed to risk the adventure. My antecedents, it was considered, entitled me to act as organizer. I set to work immediately.

DANGLING IN SPACE.

As our preparations required time, care, and method, it was unanimously decided that our venture should be made about Christmas.

Of our six cells, Van Calster's was chosen as being the most suitable. In the first place, it was necessary to saw through the thick bars which blocked the small window. A saw was indispensable, and I managed to procure one. I am not going to tell the authorities how I did so.

We all but severed the bars, leaving a scrap of iron intact at the top and base. Firm in appearance, a very slight effort would suffice to remove them.

On the appointed day we six held a secret meeting in Van Calster's cell. From its window it would, we thought, be fairly easy to make our exit. One thing caused us some uneasiness. The law courts adjoined our part of the jail. We could even see the clerks there, working at their desks, and a gas jet hardly ten yards from the cell unkindly illuminated all that portion of the walls which we should have to cross. It was impossible for us to get away before supper. Each of us received his usual dole. Immediately afterwards we again assembled in Van Calster's cell.

And now the fateful hour had come. At 7.20 p.m. I gave the signal. A single word would have been an indiscretion, with the sentry pacing to and fro in the corridor just outside the cell door. We grasped one another's hands. Then with one sharp stroke each bar was detached. One end of a rope, formed of towels cut into strips and knotted together, was made fast to the window; the other end was let fall into space. With the aid of this rope we hoped to be able to get over the first of the two walls. The adjutant went first. We watched him as he bestrode the window-ledge and grasped the rope. He disappeared.

I went next. I grasped the rope firmly, and let myself slide downwards. Great was my surprise and dismay when I suddenly discovered that I no longer felt any support. The rope had broken!

I fell heavily on the ground from a height of fifteen feet. I bumped my head, was stunned and dizzy, bruised and bleeding. But I had no time to worry about such trifles. Happily, I tumbled on the right side of the wall. I crossed the courtyard at full speed, leaving behind me a trail of blood, very conspicuous on the white snow. I raised my eyes to Van Calster's window. One by one my comrades were descending.

More prudent than I, they observed the breakage of the rope, and reached the ground outside the wall without accident.

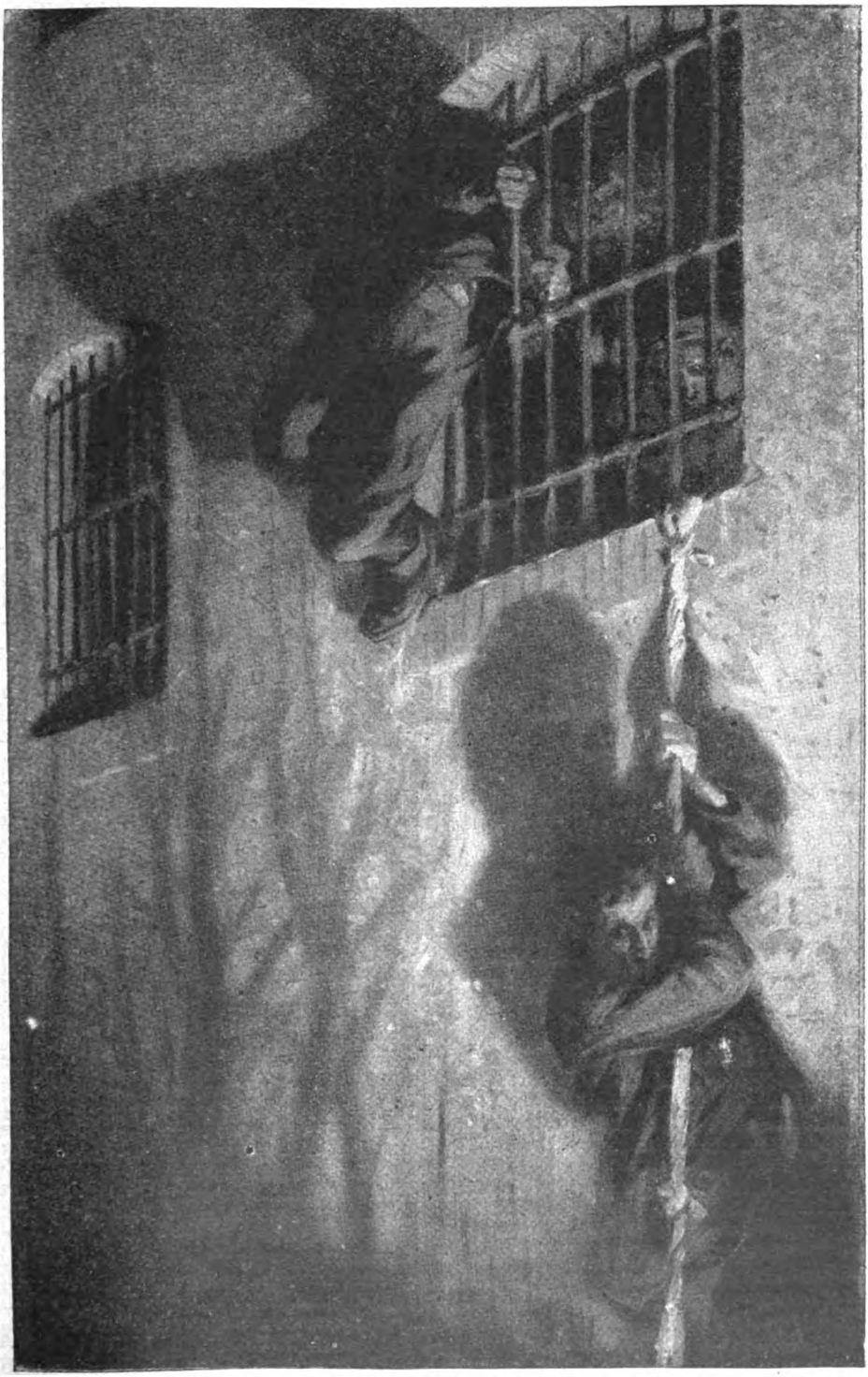
A COMRADE STOPPED ON THE ROAD TO FREEDOM.

We were reunited. Our next task was the scaling of the second wall. By a lucky chance, the dog was having his supper with the *corps de garde*, and in default of a ladder we utilized his empty kennel. We placed it against the wall. Then the tallest of us stood upon it; a second man mounted on the shoulders of the first, and scrambled to the top of the wall. With the help of my big belt, he then assisted the rest of us, each in turn, to clamber up beside him.

Now we had only to jump off into the street. This, one by one, we did. I, still somewhat dizzy, fell literally into the arms of my companions.

"Halt! *Wer da?* Who goes there?"

What a mischance! Some boys had seen us climbing the second wall, and given the alarm. Like a gust of wind we flew through a street, a garden, another street. There was a hard frost; now and then one of us fell on the slippery



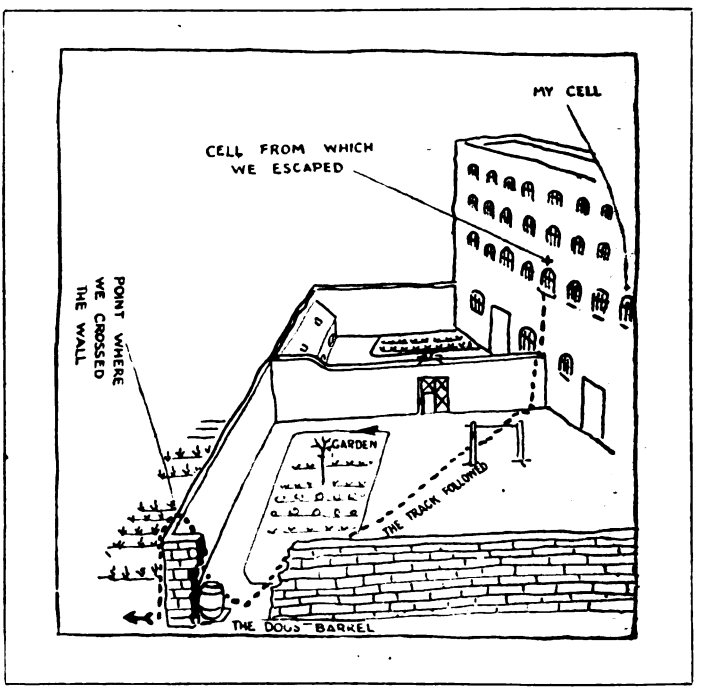
"THE ADJUTANT WENT FIRST. I WENT NEXT. I GRASPED THE ROPE FIRMLY AND LET MYSELF SLIDE DOWNWARDS."

Drawn from a sketch by Sergeant Letor.

ground. With a smothered oath he picked himself up and ran on again. We came to a road with a footpath on either side. Into this we turned. We heard behind us the patter of hurrying feet. We turned our heads, and saw some twenty street-urchins chasing us. One of our number foolishly separated himself from his companions, and crossed to the other side of the road. The odious little wretches, finding it easier to pursue one man than half-a-dozen men, left us in peace and concentrated their attentions on him, with the result that he was presently arrested.

We walked, still unmolested, over frozen marshes and through woods carpeted with snow.

The morning twilight surprised us on an absolutely bare plain. It afforted us no shelter; there was no undulation of the ground, no little cluster of trees in which we might hide. What was to be done? At a distance of only a few paces we saw a farm. We did not hesitate. With the stealth and caution of Red Indians on the war-path we opened the gate of the farmyard and crept inside. In the barn an immense heap of straw covered the whole of



PLAN SHOWING HOW WE ESCAPED.
Drawn by Sergeant Letor.

We continued to run. The time was now twenty minutes to eight. We had the whole night before us. We scurried along as fast as our legs could carry us, several times ducking into ditches to avoid being seen. Cyclists, obviously on the look-out for us, spun along the roads. But the night was pitch-dark, they did not see us.

Soon we came to the River Lippe, which I crossed by the bridge during my first attempt at flight.

IN SNOW AND MUD.

We walked on until dawn, with only ten minutes of repose in the two hours and a half which had elapsed since we left the Lippe. We were in a wood when the darkness began to disperse. We dug holes in the snow, in which we crouched, perished with cold.

Fortunately for us, the days were short in winter. At 4.30 p.m. we were able to proceed. the ground. What a godsend! We nestled into it—buried ourselves in it—all five of us. Soothed and comforted by the soft, beneficent warmth of the straw, we grew drowsy, and soon were wrapped in blissful slumber.

At midday we were awakened by a tremendous racket. We peeped through the straw and beheld the farmer, his wife, and their helpers loading a cart with mangold-wurzels. A host of children were playing close to us. Should it occur to one of them to jump upon the straw, we were discovered!

An hour passed thus—an anxious hour, which seemed interminable. But at last the task was finished; workers and children dispersed. What a relief!

At six o'clock in the evening, refreshed by that delicious sleep, and also by a meal of chocolate and preserves, we again pressed on towards Holland, which we hoped to reach that

night. This final stage of our journey was exceedingly trying. It had been raining. The snow had melted here and there. We tumbled into holes and ditches, emerging painfully from the icy slush, the thawing mud, which at times covered us up to our knees.

At three o'clock a railroad came into view. We crawled along it. Some thirty yards from us a German sentry stood on guard. We observed with satisfaction that, not wishing to wet his feet, he preferred the shelter of his box to the rough weather outside. At this moment the rain was pouring down in torrents. It was not altogether unfriendly to us, for if it made us wet and dirty as water-spaniels (but we were that already !), it also drowned the sound of our footsteps.

That we were now close to Holland was shown by the barbed-wire entanglements, in which we left half our clothes. We passed through in rags and tatters, and with torn skins, but with joyful hearts. The end was in view. Oh, that no disaster might overtake us at the last moment !

SAFE AT LAST.

Suddenly I uttered a cry of joy. " Holland, my friends ! " I had recognized this " promised land " by the landmarks which indicate the frontier. It was December 24th, Christmas Eve.

Even when we had entered upon Dutch territory we ran for some time, so great was our respect for the range of German guns. An isolated farm lay sleeping in the midst of open country, with its streak of white smoke ascending heavenward. I approached and tapped on the window-pane. The farmer, wearing a sort of cap, opened the door. I explained matters with some difficulty, but he understood. Five escaped Frenchmen ! The good man was delighted. In a moment the whole household was awake and busy. Branches of trees, flung on the fire, crackled cheerfully. The table was laid with white bread, cakes, bacon, butter, coffee, and I know not what besides ! We broke down. We—soldiers who had been through such terrible adventures—broke down in tears !

When breakfast was over the farmer accompanied us to the Dutch authorities at Winterswyke, whence, after the usual examination, we were taken to the French hotel of Zon. We were provided with clothes, overwhelmed with gifts. A musical society of the town was giving a concert, to which we were invited. As we entered the hall we were greeted with the strains of the " Marseillaise." This was too much for us. Again we broke down. Who could listen to our " Marseillaise " here, only a mile and a half from the German frontier, after sixteen months of captivity in the enemy's country, and remain unmoved ? Not we !

And so we five embraced one another, with tears streaming down our cheeks.

Our journey to France, *viâ* Rotterdam, Flushing, and England, is a matter of secondary interest. Our one burning desire was to see again our own beloved country and our dear ones there.

This happiness became ours in the early days of January, 1916, and when we landed at Dieppe we felt that we were abundantly recompensed for all our tribulations.

SAFE AT LAST IN HOLLAND — READING FROM LEFT TO RIGHT THE FIVE SEATED ARE VAN CALSTER, LETOR, DURUPT DE BALEINE, BIENVENU, AND LE GUEN.

The CASTAWAYS.

By

W. W. JACOBS.

Illustrated by Will Owen.

CHAPTER XV.

EXCEPT for an occasion on which Miss Mudge was lost at Colombo and was brought back to the ship by three Cingalese gentlemen in striped petticoats with their hair done up in a bun, the voyage progressed without incident. Between ports nothing happened to break the monotony of the days, and, in these circumstances, even the youngest and fairest began to attach an importance to meal-times that was totally lacking on shore. Some of the older members began to put on flesh, and Mr. Pope, confronted by the twin evils of corpulence and a liver that clamoured for attention, laid his case before the doctor.

"No good coming to me," said Maloney, brusquely; "you ought to see a magistrate."

"Magistrate? What for?" demanded the other, staring.

"Six months' hard labour," replied the doctor. "I've seen your kind before. What you want me to do is to give you something in a bottle that will work miracles; an antidote for four heavy meals a day and strong cigars in between. How many old brandies did you have after dinner last night?"

"Two," said Pope, slowly. "There's no need to look like that; you had three."

"Absence of mind," declared the doctor. "I was thinking out a problem in medical science. It might just as well have been water; I shouldn't have known."

"You work out problems every night, then," said Pope, "and I've never seen you take water with them yet. It's a bad example for a doctor to set; naturally other people think it is right to do what he does."

"It's wasting good breath on you to argue," said Maloney, "and it's wasting the best possible medical skill to try and treat you."

"I'm going to be treated all the same, though," declared Pope, breathing hard.

Maloney shrugged his shoulders. "All right; come along, then," he said, cheerfully. "I'll mix you up a little bottle."

"Will it do me any good?" inquired the patient.

"Not the least in the world," was the reply. "It's merely to put your mind at ease. Fortified with the mixture (two tablespoonfuls three times a day), you will indulge more than ever."

"But I want to be treated properly," protested Pope. "I want to get well."

"Will you put yourself into my hands?" demanded the doctor.

Pope eyed him uneasily. "Of course," he said at last, "with——"

"No 'withs,'" said the other, sternly, "and no mental reservations. It's a bad case, a case that most men would jib at, but if you promise to do exactly as I tell you I'll undertake it."

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" I've always understood that any sudden change——" began Pope.

The doctor turned to Knight, who had just come up with Talwyn and Tollhurst. " He's going to teach me my business now," he said, despairingly.

" All right," said Pope, gruffly; " do as you like."

" You hear," said Maloney, turning to the audience. " My patient has placed himself unreservedly in my hands. Two months' treatment, and he will be a convert to the simple life. His taste for alcohol, tobacco, and strong meats will be entirely eradicated, and the dinner-bell will serve merely to remind him of past errors."

Mr. Pope began his treatment the same day, and dined simply and healthfully off a pint of hot water. Conversation in his immediate neighbourhood languished, and it was a relief to all when he arose and, with unpleasant emphasis, announced his intention of going on deck for a mouthful of fresh air.

Conditions were relaxed next day. He breakfasted off dry toast, lunched off biscuits, and for dinner was allowed both, his sole reward consisting in the praise accorded to his strength of mind; praise chorused by his friends between savoury mouthfuls and brimming beakers.

Diet and exercise were the two principal remedies in the doctor's medicine-chest, and, in arranging the latter to suit Mr. Pope's wishes, a little inconvenience was occasioned to others. The patient naturally objected to performing skipping and other exercises before an audience of candid, and in some cases outspoken, friends, and in these circumstances the doctor agreed to get up and superintend them at six in the morning.

" Everybody will be asleep at that time," he said, encouragingly, " except the crew, and they'll be too busy washing decks to bother about you."

Mr. Pope raised another objection.

" Cold water won't hurt you," said the doctor, " and for the lying down turn you can have a rug. There's one beautiful exercise where you lie on your back and describe circles with your legs. It's the one Adonis used to do."

Mr. Pope made a few remarks about Adonis which were mercifully carried away by the wind and sterilized by the ocean.

" If you rise at six and do your exercises," said the doctor, regarding him steadfastly, " you shall have a slice of lean meat with your lunch; if you do them well you shall have another slice for dinner."

Whether it was the promised reward or mere strength of mind, the patient quitted his bunk next morning at six o'clock, and in bare feet and purple pyjamas followed Maloney to the deck.

" A gentle walk round first," said the doctor; " the wet is good for your feet."

They took a dozen turns and then, at his command, broke into a double. The officer on the bridge leaned over to watch them.

" Now for the exercises," said the doctor, after four rounds. " Where's that rug?"

He spread it on the deck behind the drawing-room and, lying on his back with his legs close together, raised them slowly and described circles in the air. Pope, still panting from his exertions, stood by watching coldly.

" Now you try," said Maloney, springing up. " Flat on your back and your legs extended to begin with."

" I've got a touch of lumbago this morning," growled the patient.

" It's a cure for lumbago," was the reply. " Down you go."

Mr. Pope got down and, the doctor having pressed his shoulders to the rug and walked all round, peering at him from different angles, commenced his instructions.

" At the word 'One,'" he said, slowly, " raise both feet from the deck. O-one! There's no need for you to raise your head to look at them. Nobody wants to steal them. Now, begin again: 'O-one!' There's nothing to giggle at!"

" I'm not giggling," said Pope, indignantly.

" You were making some fizzy noise," said his instructor. " Keep your mouth shut and breathe through your nose. Now."

Mr. Pope had completed three circles, and was half-way through the fourth, when the sound of a faint agonized moan brought his feet down and his head round with great swiftness. The form of Miss Blake disappeared around the corner of the drawing-room as though withdrawn by some powerful but invisible agency. Stifled sounds issued from within.

" Don't take any notice of them," counselled the doctor, as Pope, very red of face, scrambled to his feet.

" It was the pup-pup-pup-purple pies that upset me," wailed the voice of Miss Blake. " Didn't he—look—a dream! And his little pink to-to-toes waving in the air! Oh! Oh!! Oh!!!"

Judging by the inflection of the voices within, the sufferer was getting but scant sympathy. Maloney put his head in at the door and saw

Knight and Peplow, with Miss Seacombe, gazing disdainfully at Miss Blake, whose face was buried in a sofa cushion.

"And what's the meaning of it all?" demanded the doctor. "And why are you all up at this time?"

"Well, if you come to that, why are you up?" retorted Knight.

"Duty," said the other. "I'm looking after my patient's interests. He has now retreated to his cabin; and the exercises only just begun!"

"Well, let him do 'em in his cabin in future," said Knight. "We don't want purple acrobats first thing in the morning. It's a disturbing influence."

"'AT THE WORD "ONE,"' HE SAID, SLOWLY, 'RAISE BOTH FEET FROM THE DECK. THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO RAISE YOUR HEAD TO LOOK AT THEM.'"

Maloney shook his head. "He's going to do 'em on deck in the fresh air," he said, firmly. "You'll have to get up later."

"We were here first," said Knight.

"Early Rising Brigade," explained Peplow, nodding.

"Been established for weeks," added Knight.

Maloney grinned. "Why didn't you tell me?" he inquired.

"Because the number is limited to four," said Knight, as Miss Seacombe, with a slight elevation of her head, passed out, followed by Miss Blake. "You get your man up at five and let him get his contortions over before we appear, there's a good chap."

Maloney shook his head. "If you'd heard him when I mentioned six o'clock you wouldn't ask it," he replied.

"Very well, we'll keep to the other end of the deck," said Knight, restlessly. "What is more, we will stay in the smoke-room."

"I'll put it to him," said the doctor, doubtfully. "I want to do all I can for you young people, but of course my patients stand first. Pope is an interesting case—a sort of overgrown rose-bush I'm going to prune down."

"I expect he is waiting for you—and the pruning-knife," said Knight. "Don't let us keep you. Duty first."

"Four's company," assented Maloney, with a nod; "five is—good company."

"I wish you'd get your rose-bush to do his exercises after we are all in bed," said Knight, buttonholing him as he turned to go. "If the other people get to hear of them they'll be getting up early too."

"We must take the risk," said the other, blandly. "Good thing for them if they do, but I don't think they'd make a practice of it. Once would be enough."

The news, as Knight had foreseen, soon leaked out. For once Miss Mudge found the boatswain's conversation interesting, his description of Mr. Pope's skipping in particular being so well received that he began to entertain a high opinion of his powers as a *raconteur*.

"You ought to see 'im; you'd burst," he said, tenderly.

Miss Mudge received the suggestion coldly.

"Or else 'ave a fit," urged Mr. Tarn, eyeing her hopefully.

"It wouldn't amuse me," said the girl, in a superior voice. "And I hope I'm too much of a lady to get up at six in the morning to

look at any gentleman that ever was born, especially " (she shivered slightly) " when he is not dressed to receive visitors."

" I don't see no 'arm in it," said the disappointed boatswain. " Now suppose, for the sake of argyment, it was you instead o' Mr. Pope, why every man Jack of us would——"

He broke off suddenly as Miss Mudge, closing her book with a bang, gathered up her work and stalked off with her head in the air. He returned with a sigh to his duty of finding fault with men who had neglected theirs.

It is sad to relate that Lady Penrose displayed less refinement in the matter than her maid. Indeed, Miss Mudge had no sooner informed her, with all due respect, of Mr. Pope's early morning exercises than she was formulating plans for witnessing them.

" Easiest thing in the world," said Carstairs, to whom she confided her desire. " Get up at ten to six to-morrow morning, and lie in wait for him in the smoke-room or somewhere. I'll get up too, if I may."

" Do you think he would mind ? " inquired Lady Penrose, with somewhat belated consideration.

" Why should he ? " said Carstairs. " Besides, he won't know. We shall have the smoke-room all to ourselves at that hour, and not a soul will be any the wiser."

They had the smoke-room to themselves next morning for exactly two minutes, at the end of which time the door opened and admitted Miss Blake. A startled " Oh ! " sufficiently expressed her opinion of the situation. Knight and Peplow, who followed with Miss Seacombe, maintained a discreet silence.

A faint shadow flitted across the face of Lady Penrose. " Dear me," she said, recovering with a little laugh, " you are up early ! "

" Healthy," said Knight, briefly.

" How interesting ! " murmured Lady Penrose. " Have you been taking this prescription for long ? "

" Not very," said Knight, suavely. " Not longer than you and Carstairs will, I hope."

" We came here to see Mr. Pope," said Lady Penrose.

Knight bowed. " We came on the same errand—four of us," he added, somewhat pointedly. " Pope—who is a sensitive plant —usually performs aft."

In the somewhat constrained silence that followed an odd pattering noise was heard outside, and, before anybody could close the door, Pope, who was doing a sort of frog exercise with bent knees, and knuckles on the deck, passed in a bound. Maloney, who was following up behind, put his head in at the door and glared at them.

" Is it a mothers' meeting or what ? " he inquired, indignantly. " How do you think my patient is to preserve his equilibrium when he is exposed to this sort of thing ? "

" Perhaps he didn't see us," suggested Peplow.

" He did," said the doctor, heatedly. " He has now disappeared below, and I would not like to repeat the language he is using. How is a medical man to do himself justice when he is interfered with like this ? "

" Do you think that this ship is reserved for you and your precious patient ? " demanded Miss Seacombe, with some heat.

" That we are to stay in bed until you tell us to get up ? " added Miss Blake.

" Perhaps you'd like to lock us in our cabins ? " suggested Mr. Peplow.

" Not you," said the doctor, significantly. " I should like to give you the same treatment that I'm giving Pope. Do you a lot of good."

" Same treatment as Pope ? What for ? " demanded the startled Mr. Peplow.

" Anybody'll tell you," said the doctor, darkly, as he withdrew.

" What does he mean ? " inquired Mr. Peplow, looking around. " I'm perfectly healthy. I take all the exercise I can get. I've been up at six every morning for the last six——"

" Six ? " prompted Lady Penrose, gently.

" Hours," continued Mr. Peplow, a trifle confused by the ferocity of Mr. Knight's glance.

" I'm sure you have done all you can do," said Lady Penrose, in a sympathetic voice. " I had no idea you were so energetic. You make me thoroughly ashamed of my laziness. I must try and follow your example."

" If it's to see my patient—my late patient —you want to get up early," said Maloney, appearing again, " you can give up the idea."

" Late patient ! " repeated Carstairs, with a start.

The doctor nodded. " He is in the steward's pantry," he said, gloomily. " Markham has taken the case out of my hands, and is treating it with slices of cold ham."

CHAPTER XVI.

" So far so good," said Lady Penrose, with a half-sigh. " It really seems that we are going to sail round the world without meeting a single adventure."

" Do you want one ? " inquired Carstairs.

" A little one, perhaps," was the reply.

"Just a little thrill of some sort; something a little out of the common of everyday life. A shipwrecked crew to rescue, or something of that sort. Fancy being out in a little boat in this darkness alone with the stars and the water!"

"Deprived of food and drink, and Pope's version of the 'Bay of Biscay,'" said Carstairs, as heroic bellowings and the tinkle of a piano sounded from the drawing-room.

"THEY BROUGHT UP ONE OF THE FIREMEN, WHO RATHER FANCIES HIMSELF IN THAT LINE.'"

"He is quite himself again now," said Lady Penrose. "He says that he dismissed his doctor just in time."

"Awkward if he has to call him in again," said Carstairs, with a smile. "Maloney warns him that purgatory would be easy compared with his next course of treatment. I'm afraid he has an idea that some of us are too self-indulgent. Yesterday he accused Knight of being too soft, and they had a turn with the gloves before breakfast this morning to settle it."

"I heard of it," said Lady Penrose, dryly. "Mr. Knight does most useless things well."

"Maloney would agree with you about the boxing, at any rate," replied Carstairs. "He is still sore about it, but what hurt him more than anything was that, after giving him a thorough dusting, Knight admitted the charge of softness and asked for a tonic."

His companion gave a faint laugh. "It might have done Mr. Knight a little good to be defeated," she remarked.

Carstairs nodded. "One or two other altruists took the same view," he said, slowly. "They brought up one of the firemen, who rather fancies himself in that line, and the result is that they are a man short in the stokehold today. The skipper complained to me about it. He seemed most annoyed because he hadn't been called up to see it. 'Stop it,' he said, but I knew what he meant."

"You men are all alike," said Lady Penrose, shrugging her shoulders. "It is horrible."

"Shocking," said Carstairs; "but I agree with you that it might do Knight good to meet his master at the game. Whom could we find?"

Lady Penrose leaned back, considering. "Captain Tollhurst," she suggested, at last.

"Tollhurst!" exclaimed Carstairs, with surprise. "Do you really think he could stand up to Knight?"

"No," was the reply.

"Well, then——"

"Might do Captain Tollhurst good," said Lady Penrose, maintaining her gravity by an effort.

Carstairs' eyes twinkled safely in the darkness. "You want to do good to so many people," he murmured. "The saintly side of your character is uppermost to-night."

"How dull for you!" said Lady Penrose. "I'm so sorry. Is Mr. Pope really going to sing 'Tom Bowling'?" she added, as the opening chords of the piano and a modest cough were heard.

"I'm afraid so," said Carstairs.

They sat almost in silence until the song was finished, two remarks of his being first suspended and then entirely lost owing to the interest occasioned by the efforts of the vocalist to reach his top-note.

"Pity he never married," said Lady Penrose as the song ended amid general applause; "a good wife would burn the piano if she couldn't stop him any other way. I believe men remain single to avoid criticism."

"There are other reasons," said Carstairs, musingly. "You haven't considered man's shyness and his general sense of unworthiness. If it's a genuine case he often puts his idol on a pedestal; she can't climb down for fear of making a false step, and he is afraid to reach up to help her."

"But if they do happen to marry," inquired Lady Penrose, "what becomes of the pedestal?"

"They put the first-born on it," replied Carstairs. "He generally wears it out."

"You must have devoted a lot of time to the subject," remarked Lady Penrose. "I believe you are the sort of man that would build an Eiffel Tower for the lady. You would end by making her giddy."

"How easy it is to be misunderstood," sighed Carstairs. "As a matter of fact, the methods of certain savage races I have read about appeal to me much more strongly. They give the adored one a tap over the head with a club and the thing is done."

"Other men, other manners," said Lady Penrose, "but it comes to much the same thing in the end. I have no doubt that the maidens of the tribe make the clubs. You ought to go out there, Mr. Carstairs. I am sure the output would go up."

Carstairs hesitated. "If you think that," he said at last, "I will remain here."

A dark figure stepped out of the lighted doorway and came towards them.

"Coming out of the light, I can hardly see where I am," said Tollhurst, dropping into a chair next to Lady Penrose. "What a peaceful night!"

"It doesn't suit Lady Penrose," said Carstairs; "she has been sighing for adventure."

The captain laughed gently. "Better without them," he returned. "What could be better than this? And, after all, things are always possible at sea. There is always a chance of running into a submerged wreck. I have had that experience once, and I can assure you I don't want it again. Or fire; think of a fire at sea, and putting off in small boats hundreds of miles from the nearest land!"

"Have you had that experience too?" inquired Lady Penrose.

The captain wrestled fiercely with the temptation. "No," he said at last; and, in view of his questioner's comments, felt sure that he had chosen the better part.

"I had an alarm of fire once," he said, breaking a somewhat prolonged silence. "Ten years ago in an old barque bound for Archangel. Nasty while it lasted, but we got it under in three or four hours."

"Interesting life," murmured Lady Penrose. "You ought to write a book, Captain Tollhurst."

The captain laughed his gentle laugh again. "No good," he said, shaking his head. "I couldn't write a line. Fellows who write the best books are the fellows who have never seen anything."

"I think you could write a splendid book," declared Lady Penrose, with warmth.

"Awfully good of you," said the unconscious captain. "Wish I could. Should ask permission to dedicate it to you."

Lady Penrose murmured her acknowledgments.

"Happenings in books are well enough," said Carstairs; "that is where I prefer to enjoy mine."

"Every man to his trade," said the captain, indulgently. "It is just a matter of use. I have been knocking about since my boyhood. Soon after I left the Army I was big-game hunting in Africa, and I didn't speak to a white man for nine months."

"Poor things!" said Lady Penrose. "I mean the animals you killed in that time," she added, as the captain moved uneasily. "You must have accounted for a lot."

"I didn't miss many," said the captain, lighting a cigarette. He leaned back in his chair and, becoming reminiscent, related a few of the more exciting episodes. Lightly and easily he skipped from peril to peril, until at last Lady Penrose, with a sharp intake of breath that might have been misunderstood for sympathy, rose suddenly and bade her companions "good night."

"I'm afraid perhaps I was a little bit too

realistic," said Tollhurst, as she disappeared below. "Well, I'm off too. Good night."

Carstairs nodded and, lighting another cigarette, sat for some time in thought. His guests came out of the drawing-room in twos and threes and, after loitering in little groups, dispersed to bed. Knight and Peplow, after leaning against the side opposite him for some time, crossed over and took the two empty chairs.

"Nothing on his conscience," remarked Knight, presently; "quite unperturbed."

"Quite," said Peplow, dutifully.

"He seems to be asleep," said Knight, after waiting for some time. "He inveigles us on to this beastly little ship of his and then shuts his eyes to things."

"Perhaps he *is* asleep," remarked the useful Mr. Peplow.

"Sleepy," said Carstairs, with a yawn; "but don't mind me, just go on with your little chat. I am going to turn in soon."

"Not till we've done with you," said Knight. "We consider that we were lured on to this plutocratic craft under false pretences, and we want to know what you are going to do about it. When we accepted your invitation we thought that there would be a certain amount of 'sitting-out,' so to speak, and instead of that it's like living in the midst of a public meeting."

"We could leave you behind at Melbourne," suggested Carstairs.

"You've got hold of the wrong end of the stick," said Knight; "*we* don't want to be left behind, but if you could arrange to leave some of the others it would be just the thing. It only wants a little thinking out."

"I'll go and think it over now," said Carstairs, rising. "I can think better in bed. Good night."

"We haven't finished yet," said Knight. "Freddie has got a lot to say. Go on, Freddie; tell him how we agreed to do all in our power to help *him*."

"Help me!" repeated Carstairs, with a slight laugh. "What are you talking about?"

"You know," said Knight, significantly, "He knows, doesn't he, Freddie?"

Mr. Peplow swallowed. "Yes," he replied. "So—so——"

"Yes?" said Carstairs, after a pause.

"So does everybody else," finished Mr. Peplow, with an effort.

"And you have our full consent and blessing," added Knight. "In fact, we think it might be a good thing for both of us; anyway, things couldn't be much worse."

"I haven't the least idea what you are talking about," said Carstairs, somewhat stiffly.

"That's all right, then," said Knight; "but if you really want to know, ask Miss Flack, or Mrs. Jardine, or Talwyn, or—— Not now," he added, as Carstairs walked away; "they're all in bed."

"Stuffy!" said Peplow, sagely, as Carstairs vanished.

"So am I," said his friend. "Come along. Let's have a walk up and down; for once we are alone. Why! Halloa, Biggs!"

"Good evening, sir," said Biggs. "I just came for'ard for a blow before turning in."

"And I am just going to have a whisky and soda before doing the same. It's you that ought to have it, really—after that hot engine-room."

"Thank you, sir," said the chauffeur. "If there isn't enough to go round, I shall watch you drink it with pleasure."

They entered the smoke-room just as Markham was having a final look round. At a word from Knight he busied himself with the whisky and a siphon.

"Turned a bit pale, hasn't it?" murmured Mr. Biggs, as he took the glass from his old enemy; "but perhaps it's the motion of the ship."

"Colour it yourself," said Knight. "I suppose it's in order to give you a drink," he added, as the chauffeur complied. "I mean, the skipper wouldn't object?"

"Just what I was wondering, sir," said Mr. Biggs, cheerfully. "I expect he would; it seems to me it's what skippers are for—to object to things. But even an admiral couldn't help himself now. It's gone."

He said good night, and with a wink at the butler, which elicited only an icy stare in response, went off to his quarters.

Mr. Peplow's gloom, never of a very lasting nature, passed with the night. Any lingering trace was dispelled by the fresh morning air, with its appetizing blend of grilled bacon and coffee, and the news that Mrs. Jardine was confined to her cabin with one of her traditional headaches—a headache that had been in the family for generations, and was rumoured to have been a source of considerable trouble to the Plantagenets.

He sat in the smoke-room after lunch with a cigarette and a book, until the former expired from lack of attention and the latter sustained injuries to its back from a sudden fall. He opened his eyes at last to see the laughing face of Miss Blake framed in the doorway.

"I was just going to fetch Miss Flack," she remarked; "the poor thing wants gloves badly. She was talking about it yesterday."

"I wasn't asleep," said Mr. Peplow. "Where is she?"

"Playing bridge," was the reply. "Isabel is sitting with aunt, and as nearly everybody else is playing cards, I thought I'd come and talk to you. Still, if you'd rather sleep——"

"Sleep!" exclaimed the other, in a deep voice. "Have you realized that I've not had a word alone with you for weeks?"

"Really?" said the girl, carelessly. "I hadn't noticed it."

"When it isn't Mrs. Jardine it's Miss Flack," continued Mr. Peplow, "and when they snatch a few brief moments from duty Talwyn mounts guard."

"What are you talking about?" inquired Miss Blake.

"Never mind," said Mr. Peplow. "It's no good wasting time grousing. Let us improve the shining hours."

"How?"

"Let us talk," said Peplow, tenderly.

"That *will* be improving," said the girl.

"That's right," said Peplow, gloomily, "make fun of me. When you smiled so nicely at me just now——"

"I?" said Miss Blake. "Smiled? I was laughing at you. You've no idea how funny you looked. Your mouth was open, and you were snoring like a baby with the croup."

Mr. Peplow stiffened in his chair. "I'm sorry I woke up as I was affording you so much amusement," he said, with dignity.

"So am I," said Miss Blake, with a sudden change of manner. "However, I won't disturb you," and she went off with her head at an angle.

"She's gone," murmured the amazed Peplow. "She's actually gone. Well!"

He went outside and, finding the deck deserted, threw himself into a lounge-chair and sat scowling at the universe. The skipper, passing on his way to the chart-room, pulled up and smiled affably.

"Couldn't improve on the weather," he remarked, crumpling his fringe of grey beard in his fist.

Mr. Peplow assented without enthusiasm. "Where are we for next?" he inquired.

"Australian ports," replied Captain Vobster, "New Zealand; call in at some of the South Sea Islands, and then home."

Mr. Peplow sighed. "The islands ought to be interesting," he remarked. "Pick out a nice little one, cap'n, with nobody else on it, and leave me there. I'm going to turn beachcomber. I retire from the world."

"Very nice life too," said the accommodating skipper, "for a single man; married ones too, sometimes. I knew one man that did it. Ran away from his wife to punish her, and after twenty years of it found that she had come in for a fortune soon after he disappeared and married again. Time he got back found they'd run through it all. Spoilt his life for him, poor chap."

Mr. Peplow said "Oh," and turned with a beaming and forgiving smile to Miss Blake as she came quietly up to them.

"Though I've known some people take to the beach and get tired of it in a week," continued the skipper.

Mr. Peplow, who was gazing ardently at Miss Blake, said "Ah!"

"Some of 'em get melancholy," explained the skipper.

"Really," said Miss Blake, as she took a chair next to Peplow.

"Suicidal almost."

There was a somewhat constrained silence as his audience, with their hands folded, sat staring straight in front of them.

"It's the loneliness," said the skipper, who felt that he was making an impression.

"*H'm!*" said both.

"A man has time to sit and think."

"*H'm!*"

Captain Vobster paused. There was a feeling in the atmosphere for which he was utterly unable to account, and he stood scratching the side of his nose, possessed with a horrible idea that he had said something wrong. He glanced at them in perplexity, and then, suddenly clapping his hand over his mouth, went off with his eyes dancing. Slight sounds escaped on his way to the chart-room.

"What an ill-bred man!" exclaimed Miss Blake, gazing after him.

"Shocking," agreed the other.

"I—I am not going to remain here to be laughed at," continued the girl. "The idea!"

"He wasn't laughing at you," said Peplow, hastily, "and he has gone now. How wonderfully well you are looking! What was old Talwyn talking to you about at lunch?"

"Different things," replied the girl. "Don't stare like that; it's rude."

"I'm not staring," said Mr. Peplow, ardently. "I'm worshipping."

"Well, it's not nice," said Miss Blake, who had an uneasy feeling that she had come back

too easily. "It's just the way you eyed the beef at lunch."

"Eyed the beef?" repeated the choking Mr. Peplow. "Do you think I care what I eat?"

"Of course you do," said Miss Blake. "Everybody notices it. You have got an excellent appetite, and I am only talking to you for your good. If you are not careful you'll get quite chubby."

"HE STOOD SCRATCHING THE SIDE OF HIS NOSE, POSSESSED WITH A HORRIBLE IDEA THAT HE HAD SAID SOMETHING WRONG."

"That'll do," said Mr. Peplow, thickly.

"Do!" exclaimed the incensed Miss Blake, springing to her feet. "*Do!* How dare you talk to me like that? What do you mean by it?"

She stood looking at him as one might look at a worm that had tried to bite a blackbird. Then, with an indignant exclamation, she went off.

Mr. Peplow made no effort to detain her. A picture of indignant misery, he sat lumpishly in his chair, scowling darkly at the deck.

"Halloa!" said Carstairs, coming out of the drawing-room. "All alone?"

"I like being alone," said Mr. Peplow, in a deep voice.

"Do you, though," said Carstairs, eyeing him with some interest.

"I don't wish to be bothered with people," continued Mr. Peplow. "Let them go their way and I'll go mine."

"Poor—old—man!" said Carstairs, smiling. "I know what's the matter with you."

"Oh!" said Mr. Peplow, offensively.

Carstairs nodded. "Indigestion."

"Eh?" shouted Peplow, starting up as though he had been stung. "Look here, Carstairs, I don't know what you mean, but I've had enough of it. It's a vile conspiracy. It's—it's an infernal plant."

"What on earth's the matter?" inquired the marvelling Carstairs.

"You—you've been talking to Miss Blake," cried Peplow, trembling with rage.

"Well, so do you when you get the chance," said Carstairs, in a soothing voice. "You don't want to monopolize the poor girl entirely, do you? Why shouldn't I speak to her? And I talk to her about you, my boy. Only yesterday I was saying how fat and well you——"

He drew back suddenly as Mr. Peplow, with an inarticulate yell, sprang to his feet and stood mouthing at him. For some time the young man stood struggling in vain for speech; then he turned with a wild gesture and stamped his way below.

(To be continued.)

Two Goats, a Garden, and —!

By ELIZABETH ALLISON.

Illustrated by W. Heath Robinson.

FELICITY and I are great on economy, and when one morning I read aloud from the columns of the *Times* a suggestion that the time and labour spent in the mowing and rolling of lawns might be saved by the keeping of a few goats, Felicity clapped her hands, regardless of a piece of buttered toast and an egg-spoon.

"Goats!" she gurgled. "How lovely!"

"It says," I continued, "that they not only keep the grass down, but incidentally increase the nation's food reserves and supply nourishing milk."

"How many do you think we ought to have?" asked my wife. "I should think we have room for six——"

In due time the goats arrived—not six, but a single pair. Felicity was in raptures. She said, "Oh, John! You're not going to tie them up! They'll never be happy like that!"

My reply was to drive the stakes in a little more firmly. "They must be tethered," I explained, "or they might stray away; and then where should we be?"

The next morning the goats had disappeared—stakes and all.

"Wherever can they be?" asked Felicity, in despair.

The answer was supplied by the entrance of a burly figure at the garden gate. It was Noakes, the market gardener. On two pieces of rope he led two reluctant goats.

"Be these your goats?" he asked.

Felicity rushed forward.

"Oh, thank you!" she said. "Where did you find them?"

"In my lettuce-bed at five o'clock this mornin'," Noakes replied. "Five rows and a 'arf they've eat—my best lettuce, just ready for cuttin'—and I'd like to know what you're goin' to do about it—let alone what they've trampled. People didn't ought to keep animals if——"

I interposed, "How much damage do you think they've done?"

"Five rows and a 'arf of my best lettuce. You can't grow lettuce for nothin', specially these times. They was just ready for cuttin', and I'm makin' a good profit on my lettuce just now——"

"Will a sovereign cover it?" I asked, taking out my pocket-book.

"Well, sir, they was my finest lettuce, but seein' as how it's a haccident, so to speak——" He took the pound-note with a shake of his head, and retreated.

"'BE THESE YOUR GOATS?' HE ASKED."

Felicity and I gazed at each other. "Well?" I said.

"We must tie them up better," she responded.

"Yes, you bet we will," I replied. "I'll see to it this evening. In the meanwhile we'll shut them up in the tool-shed."

When I returned from the City that evening I hired a small boy at the station to carry two iron stakes and a length of steel chain up to the house. After dinner, having planted the stakes, I went down to the tool-shed. Cautiously I opened the door. Something hurled itself with the force of a catapult against the bottom button of my waistcoat, and I discovered that a gravel path is not the easiest resting-place for the back of a head somewhat sparsely covered with hair. I struggled to my feet and looked inside the tool-shed. What destruction was there! I have heard that goats will eat anything, but I should have thought that something approaching a hundredweight of hyacinth and other bulbs would have satisfied the most voracious appetite without the addition of the seats of two deck-chairs and a large hank of bast which I had just bought to tie up the carnations.

I was gazing with horror on the mischief when a terrified shriek rent the air. I rushed towards the house. There was Felicity with a screaming baby tightly hugged against her, regardless of the blood which was trickling down her dress from a cut in the child's forehead. On the ground, a yard or two distant, lay the elder boy.

"Is he dead?" whispered Felicity.

"No, only stunned," I replied. "Was it——?" pointing to the goats, which were now quietly browsing a short distance away.

She nodded. "Just telephone for the doctor, will you?" she said.

Thereafter peace for three days. On the fourth Felicity remarked, "There's something wrong with the goats, John. They've been lying about all day on the grass and making the oddest noises—something between a cough and a sneeze. Their eyes are running, too, and they look perfectly miserable."

"CAUTIOUSLY I OPENED THE DOOR. SOMETHING HURLED ITSELF AGAINST THE BOTTOM BUTTON OF MY WAISTCOAT."

"Sounds like influenza," I said. "I'll go and look at them."

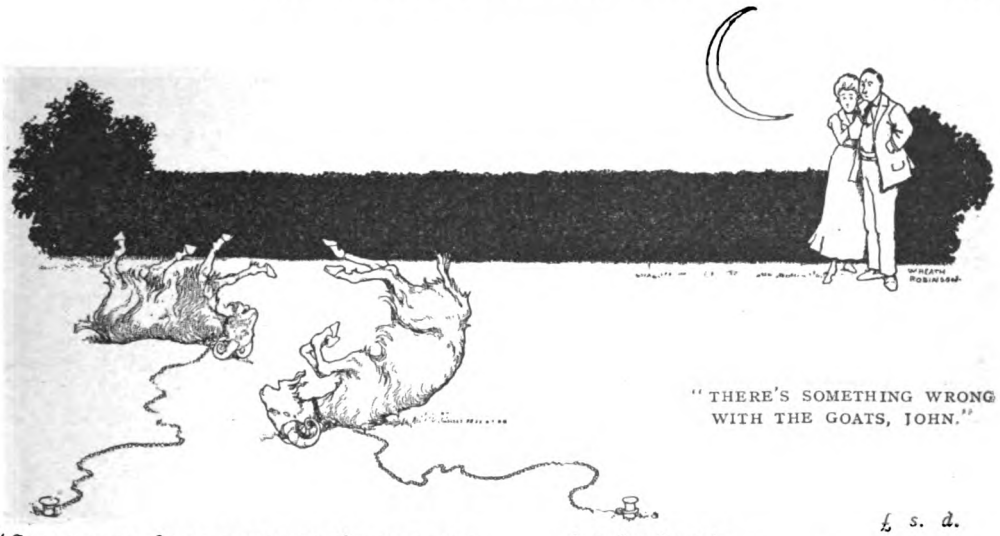
I did, and telephoned for the vet.

"It's a chill," he reported. "Feed them on bran-mash with some flowers of sulphur in it, and keep them warm."

With a sinking at my heart I led the wretched creatures back to the tool-house. It was drizzling with rain. Then I walked down to see Wilkes—a farmer of experience.

"Would you care for a couple of goats, Wilkes?" I asked, in a would-be careless fashion.

He grinned. "I would not," he said.



"THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE GOATS, JOHN."

"Someone made me a present of a goat once, and after I'd had it four days I'd have given anyone a sovereign to rid me of it."

In a few days the invalids were well enough to resume their business as lawn-mowers, and then once more they disappeared. We hunted high and low and inquired of everyone, but without result. Secretly I was delighted, but I dared not say so to my wife. Then one day I made a suggestion.

"Suppose we advertise for the goats, my dear?"

"Oh, no!" said Felicity, with guilty haste.

Then our eyes met, and we laughed.

"We're well rid of them," she said.

Three days later I received a letter from the owner of a stone-quarry a couple of miles away. It stated in brief that the bodies of two goats which were said to belong to Mr. Richards of the Woodlands had been found in his quarry. What did I desire should be done with them? In haste I replied, "Anything you like!" and sat down to review the situation.

Our effort to effect a small economy in war-time had cost us:—

	£	s.	d.
A pair of goats	4	0	0
Lettuce	1	0	0
Iron stakes and chain	0	15	6
Hire of small boy.....	0	0	0
Bulbs, etc.....	3	0	0
Two garden-chairs.....	0	10	0
One dress	5	5	0
Doctor's bill	3	3	0
Vet's. do.	1	1	0
Bran-mash, etc.	0	5	0
TOTAL..	£18	19	6

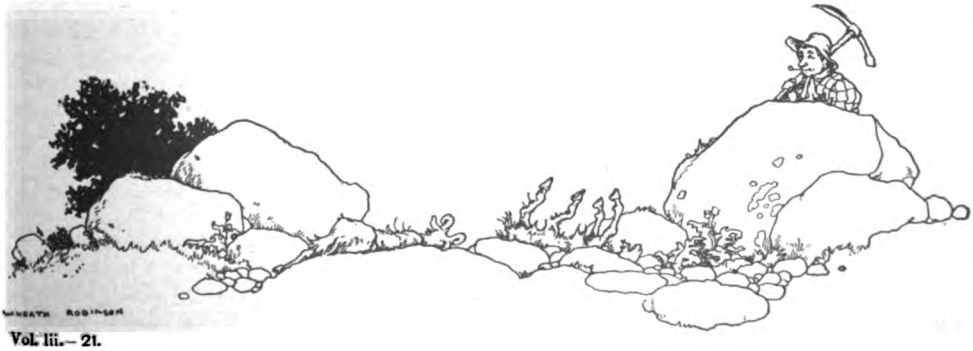
and at the end of the month an envelope arrived bearing a halfpenny stamp. From it I produced a paper. It read:—

MR. RICHARDS,
The Woodlands.

Dr. to JOHN MASON,
Quarryman.

To man's time burying 2 goats . 7/6

But that is not all. Nothing is worse than a bad reputation. The various neighbours to whom we had supplied the goats' milk complained that the babies fed upon it had developed butting and leaping propensities. So we have not only lost a good deal of money, but also most of our friends!



The BRITISH CAMPAIGN IN FRANCE.

THE FACTS AT LAST!

The Inside Story of the War.

By

A. CONAN DOYLE.

CHAPTER V.

THE LA BASSÉE-ARMENTIÈRES OPERATIONS.

(From October 11th to October 31st.)

The Great Battle Line—Advance of the Second Corps—Death of General Hamilton—The Farthest Point—Fate of the 2nd Royal Irish—The Third Corps—Exhausted Troops—First Fight of Neuve Chapelle—The Indians Take Over—The Lancers at Warneton—Pulteney's Operations—Action of Le Gheir.

N accordance with the new plans, the great transference began upon October 3rd. It was an exceedingly difficult problem, since an army of more than a hundred thousand men had to be gradually extricated by night from trenches which were often not more than a hundred yards from the enemy, while a second army of equal numbers had to be substituted in its place. Any alarm to the Germans might have been fatal, since a vigorous night attack in the middle of the operation would have been difficult to resist, and even an artillery bombardment must have caused great loss of life. The work of the Staff in this campaign has been worthy of the regimental officers and of the men. Everything went without a hitch. The Second Cavalry Division (Gough's) went first, followed immediately by the First (De Lisle's). Then the infantry was withdrawn, the Second Corps being the vanguard; the Third Corps followed, and the First was the last to leave. The Second Corps began to clear from its trenches on October 3rd—4th, and were ready for action on the Aire-Bethune line upon October 11th. The Third Corps was very little behind it, and the First had reached the new battle-ground upon the 19th. Cavalry went by road; infantry marched part of the way, trained part of the way, and did the last lap very often in motor-buses. One way or another the men were got across, the Aisne trenches were left for ever, and a new phase of the war had begun. From the chalky uplands and the wooded slopes there is a sudden change to immense plains of clay, with slow, meandering, ditch-like streams, and all the hideous features of a great coal-

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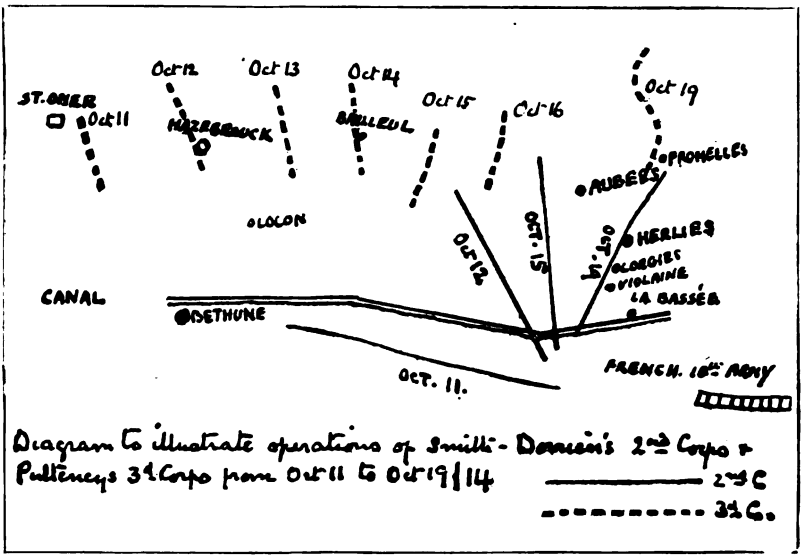
field added to the drab monotony of Nature. No scenes could be more different, but the same great issue of history and the same old problem of trench and rifle were finding their slow solution upon each. The stalemate of the Aisne was for the moment set aside and once again we had reverted to the old position where the ardent Germans declared, "This way we shall come," and the Allies, "Not a mile, save over our bodies."

THE GREAT BATTLE LINE.

The narrator is here faced with a considerable difficulty in his attempt to adhere closely to truth and yet to make his narrative intelligible to the lay reader. We stand upon the edge of a great battle. If all the operations which centred at Ypres, but which extend to the Yser Canal upon the north and to La Bassée at the south, be grouped into one episode it becomes the greatest clash of arms ever seen up to that hour upon the globe, involving a casualty list—Belgian, French, British, and German—which could by no means be computed as under two hundred and fifty thousand, and probably over three hundred thousand men. It was fought, however, over an irregular line which is roughly forty miles from north to south, while it lasted, in its active form, from October 12th to November 20th before it settled down to the inevitable siege stage. Thus both in time and in space it presents difficulties which make a concentrated, connected, and intelligible narrative no easy task. In order to attempt this, it is necessary first to give a general idea of what the British Army, in conjunction with its Allies, was endeavouring to do, and, secondly, to show how the operations affected each corps in its turn.



During the operations of the Aisne the French had extended the Allied line far to the north in the hope of outflanking the Germans. The Tenth French Army, under General Foch, formed the extreme left of this vast manœuvre, and it was supported on its left by the French cavalry. The German right had lengthened out, however, to meet every fresh extension of the French, and their cavalry had been sufficiently numerous and alert to prevent the French cavalry from getting round. Numerous skirmishes had ended in no definite result. It was at this period that it occurred, as already stated, to Sir John French that to bring the whole British Army round to the north of the line would both shorten very materially his line of communications and would prolong the line to an extent which might enable him to turn the German flank and make their whole position impossible. General Joffre having endorsed these views, Sir John took the steps which we have already seen. The British movement was, therefore, at the outset an aggressive one. How it became defensive as new factors intruded themselves, and as a result of the fall of Antwerp, will be shown at a later stage of this account.

As the Second Corps arrived first upon the scene it will be proper to begin with some account of its doings from October 12th, when it went into action, until the end of the month, when it found itself brought to a standstill by superior forces and placed upon the defensive. The doings of the Third Corps during the same period will be interwoven with those of the Second, since they were in close co-operation; and, finally, the fortunes of the First Corps will be followed and the relation shown between its doings

and those of the newly-arrived Seventh Division, which had fallen back from the vicinity of Antwerp and turned at bay near Ypres upon the pursuing Germans. Coming from different directions, all these various bodies were destined to be formed into one line, cemented together by their own dismounted cavalry and by French reinforcements, so as to lay an unbroken breakwater beyond the great German flood.

ADVANCE OF THE SECOND CORPS.

The task of the Second Corps was to get into touch with the left flank of the Tenth French Army in the vicinity of La Bassée, and then to wheel round its own left so as to turn the position of those Germans who were facing our Allies. The line of the Bethune-Lille road was to be the hinge, connecting the two armies and marking the turning-point for the British. On the 11th Gough's Second Cavalry Division was clearing the woods in front of the Aire-Bethune Canal, which marked the line of the Second Corps. By evening Gough had connected up the Third Division of the Second Corps with the Sixth Division of the Third Corps, which was already at Hazebrouck. On the 12th Hamilton's Third Division crossed the canal, followed by the Fifth Division, with the exception of the Thirteenth Brigade, which remained to the south of it. Both divisions advanced more or less north before swinging round to almost due east in their outflanking movement. The rough diagram gives an idea of the point from which they started and the positions reached at various dates before they came to an equilibrium. There were many weary stages, however, between the outset and the fulfilment, and the final results were destined to be barren as compared with the exertions and the losses involved. None the less it was, as it proved, an essential part of that great operation by which the British—with the help of their good allies—checked the German advance upon Calais in October and November, even as they had helped to head them off from Paris in August and September. During these four months the little British Army, far from being negligible, as some critics had foretold would be the case in a Continental war, was absolutely vital in holding the Allied line and taking the edge off the hacking German sword.

The Third Corps, which had detrained at St. Omer and moved to Hazebrouck, was intended to move *pari passu* with the Second, prolonging its line to the north. The First and Second British Cavalry Divisions, now under the command of De Lisle and of Gough, with Allenby as chief, had a *rôle* of their own to play, and the space between the Second and Third Corps was now filled up by a French Cavalry Division under Conneau, a whole-hearted soldier always ready to respond to any call. There was no strong opposition yet in front of the Third Corps, but General Pulteney moved rapidly forwards, brushed aside all resistance, and seized the town of Bailleul. A German position in front of the town, held by cavalry and infantry without guns, was rushed by a rapid advance of Haldane's Tenth Infantry Brigade, the 2nd Seaforths particularly distinguishing themselves, though the 1st Warwicks and 1st Irish Fusiliers had also a good many losses, the Irishmen clearing the trenches to the old cry of "Faugh-a-Ballagh!" which has sounded so often upon battlefields of old. The Tenth Brigade was on the left of the corps, and in touch with the Second Cavalry Division to the north. The whole action, with its swift advance and moderate losses, was a fine vindication of British infantry tactics. On the evening of October 15th the Third Corps had crossed the Lys, and on the 18th they extended from Warneton in the north to almost within touch of the position of the Second Corps at Aubers upon the same date.

The country in which the Second Corps was advancing upon October 12th was an extraordinarily difficult one, which offered many advantages to the defence over the attack. It was so flat that it was impossible to find places for artillery observation, and it was intersected with canals, high hedgerows, and dykes, which formed ready-made trenches. The Germans were at first not in strength, and consisted for the most part of dismounted cavalry drawn from four divisions, but from this time onwards there was a constant fresh accession of infantry and guns. They disputed with great skill and energy every position which could be defended, and the British advance during the day, though steady, was necessarily slow. Every hamlet, hedgerow, and stream meant a separate skirmish. The troops continually closed ranks, advanced, extended, and attacked from morning to night, sleeping where they had last fought. There was nothing that could be called a serious engagement, and yet the losses—almost entirely from the Third Division—amounted to three hundred for the day, the heaviest sufferers being the 2nd Royal Scots.

On the next day, the 13th, the corps swung round its left so as to develop the turning movement already described. Its front of

advance was about eight miles, and it met resistance which made all progress difficult. Again the Eighth Brigade, especially the Royal Scots and 4th Middlesex, lost heavily. The principal fighting, however, fell late in the evening upon the Fifteenth Brigade (Gleichen's), who were on the right of the line and in touch with the Bethune Canal. The enemy, whose line of resistance had been considerably thickened by the addition of several battalions of Jaeger and part of the Fourteenth Corps, made a spirited counter-attack on this portion of the advance. The 1st Cheshires and the 1st Bedfords were roughly handled and driven back, with the result that the 1st Dorsets, who were stationed at a bridge over the canal (*Pont Fixe*), found their flank exposed and sustained heavy losses, amounting to three hundred men, including Major Roper. Colonel Bols, of the same regiment, enjoyed one crowded hour of glorious life, for he was wounded, captured, and escaped all on the same evening. It was in this action also that Major Vandeleur was wounded and captured.* A section of guns which was involved in the same dilemma as the Dorsets had to be abandoned after every gunner had fallen. The Fifteenth Brigade was compelled to fall back for half a mile and entrench itself for the night. On the left the Seventh Brigade (McCracken's) had some eighty casualties in crossing the Lys, and a detachment of Northumberland Fusiliers, who covered their left flank, came under machine-gun fire, which struck down their adjutant, Captain Herbert, and a number of men. Altogether the losses on this day amounted to about seven hundred men.

DEATH OF GENERAL HAMILTON.

On the 14th the Second Corps continued its slow advance in the same direction. Upon this day the Third Division sustained a grievous loss in the shape of its commander, General Sir Hubert Hamilton, who was standing conversing with the quiet nonchalance which was characteristic of him, when a shell burst above him and a shrapnel bullet struck him on the temple, killing him at once. He was a grand commander, beloved by his men, and destined for the highest had he lived. He was buried that night after dark in a village churchyard. There was an artillery attack by the Germans during the service, and the group of silent officers, weary from the fighting line, who stood with bowed heads round the grave, could hardly hear the words of the chaplain for the whiz and crash of the shells. It was a proper ending for a soldier.

His division was temporarily taken over by General Colin Mackenzie. On this date the Thirteenth Brigade, on the south of the canal, was relieved by French troops, so that henceforward all the British were to the north. For the three preceding days this brigade had done heavy work, the pressure of the enemy falling particularly upon the 2nd Scottish Borderers, who lost Major Allen and a number of other officers and men.

The 15th was a day of spirited advance, the Third Division offering sacrifice in the old warrior fashion to the shade of its dead leader. Guns were brought up into the infantry line and the enemy was smashed out of entrenched positions and loopholed villages in spite of a most manful resistance. The soldiers carried long planks with them and threw them over the dykes on their advance. Mile after mile the Germans were pushed back, until they were driven off the high road which connects Estaires with La Bassée. The 1st Northumberland and 4th Royal Fusiliers of the Ninth Brigade, and the 2nd Royal Scots and 4th Middlesex of the Eighth, particularly distinguished themselves in this day of hard fighting. By the night of the 15th the corps had lost ninety officers and two thousand men in the four days, the disproportionate number of officers being due to the broken nature of the fighting, which necessitated the constant leading of small detachments. The German resistance continued to be admirable.

On the 16th the slow wheeling movement of the Second Corps went steadily though slowly forward, meeting always the same stubborn resistance. The British were losing heavily by the incessant fighting, but so were the Germans, and it was becoming a question which could stand punishment longest. In the evening the Third Division was brought to a stand by the village of Aubers, which was found to be strongly held. The Fifth Division was instructed to mark time upon the right, so as to form the pivot upon which all the rest of the corps could swing round in their advance on La Bassée. At this date the Third Corps was no great distance to the north, and the First Corps was detraining from the Aisne. As the Seventh Division with Byng's Third Cavalry Division were reported to be in touch with the other forces in the north, the concentration of the British Army was approach-

* Major Vandeleur was the officer who afterwards escaped from Crefeld and brought back with him a shocking account of the German treatment of our prisoners. Though a wounded man, the Major was kicked by the direct command of one German officer, and his overcoat was taken from him in bitter weather by another.

DEADLY WORK OF ALMOST DAILY

HOUSE-TO-HOUSE STREET FIGHTING BETWEEN

ing a successful issue. The weather up to now during all the operations which have been described was wet and misty, limiting the use of artillery and entirely preventing that of aircraft.

THE FARTHEST POINT.

On the 17th the advance was resumed and was destined to reach the extreme point which it attained for many a long laborious month. This was the village of Herlies, north-east of La Bassée, which was attacked in the evening by Shaw's Ninth Brigade, and was carried in the dusk at the point of the bayonet by the 1st Lincolns and the 4th Royal Fusiliers. The Seventh Brigade was less fortunate at the adjoining village of Illies, where they failed to make a lodgment, but the French cavalry on the extreme left, with the help of the 2nd Royal Irish, captured Fromelles. The Fifth Division also came forward a little, the right flank still on the canal, but the left bending round so as to get to the north of La Bassée. The day's casualties amounted to two hundred men, including eight officers.

On the 18th, Sir Charles Ferguson, who had done good work with the Army from the first gunshot of the war, was promoted to a higher rank and the command of the Fifth Division passed over to General Morland. Thus both divisions of the Second Corps changed their commanders within a week. On this date the infantry of Rolt's Fourteenth

OCCURRENCE NEAR YPRES.

THE BRITISH AND THE GERMANS.

Brigade, with some of Cuthbert's Thirteenth Brigade, were within eight hundred yards of La Bassée, but found it so strongly held that it could not be entered, the Scottish Borderers losing heavily in a very gallant advance. The village of Illies also remained impregnable, being strongly entrenched and loopholed. Shaw's Ninth Brigade took some of the trenches, but found their left flank exposed, so had to withdraw nearly half a mile and to entrench. In this little action the 1st Royal Scots Fusiliers bore the brunt of the fighting and the losses. Eight officers and nearly two hundred men of this regiment were killed or wounded. A fresh German division came into action this day and their artillery was stronger, so that the prospects of future advance were not particularly encouraging. Our own artillery was worked very hard, being overmatched and yet undefeatable. The strain both upon the men and the officers was great, and the observation officers showed great daring and tenacity.

FATE OF THE 2nd ROYAL IRISH.

On the 19th neither the Third nor the Fifth Divisions made any appreciable progress, but one British regiment was heavily engaged and added a fresh record to its ancient roll of valour. This was the 2nd Royal Irish under Major Daniell, who attacked the village of Le Pilly rather forward from the British left in co-operation with the French cavalry. The Irish infantry

charged over eight hundred yards of clear ground, carried the village by storm, and entrenched themselves within it. This advance and charge, which was carried out with the precision of an Aldershot field day, although one hundred and thirty men fell during the movement, is said by experienced spectators to have been a great feat of arms. The 20th saw a strong counter-attack of the Germans, and by the evening their two flanks had lapped round Le Pilly, pushing off on the one side the French cavalry of Conneau, and on the other a too small detachment of the Royal Fusiliers who were flanking the Irishmen. All day the defenders of Le Pilly were subjected to a terrific shell-fire, and all attempts to get messages to them were unavailing. In the evening they were surrounded, and only two or three men of the battalion were ever seen again. The gallant Daniell fell, and it is on record that his last audible words were a command to fix bayonets and fight to the end, the cartridges of the battalion being at that time exhausted. A German officer engaged in this attack and subsequently taken prisoner has deposed that three German battalions attacked the Royal Irish, one in front and one on each flank, after they had been heavily bombarded in enfilade. Several hundred Irish dead and wounded were taken out of the main trench. The original attack and the subsequent defence constitute one of the feats of arms of the war.

There was now ample evidence that the Germans had received large reinforcements and that their line was too strong to be forced. The whole object and character of the operations assumed, therefore, a new aspect. The Second and Third Corps had swung round, describing an angle of ninety degrees, with its pivot upon the right at the La Bassée Canal, and by this movement it had succeeded in placing itself upon the flank of the German force which faced the Tenth French Army. But there was now no longer any flank, for the German reinforcements had enabled them to prolong their line and so to turn the action into a frontal attack by the British. Such an attack in modern warfare can only hope for success when carried out by greatly superior numbers, whereas the Germans were now stronger than their assailants, having been joined by one division of the Seventh Corps, a brigade of the Third Corps, and the whole of the Fourteenth Corps, part of which had already been engaged.

THE THIRD CORPS.

The increased pressure was being felt by the Third Corps on the Lys, as well as by the Second to the south of them; indeed, as only a few miles intervened between the two, they may be regarded as one for these operations. We have seen that, having taken the town of Bailleul, Pulteney's Corps had established itself across the Lys, and occupied a line from Warneton to Radinghem upon October 18th. The latter village had been taken on that day by the Sixteenth Brigade in an action in which the 1st Buffs and 2nd Lancashires and Yorkshires lost heavily. Pulteney was now strongly attacked, and there was a movement of the Germans on October 20th as if to turn his right and slip in between the two British corps. The action was carried on into the 21st, the enemy still showing considerable energy and strength. The chief German advance during the day was north of La Bassée. It came upon the village of Lorgies, which was the point where the South Lancashires, of McCracken's Seventh Brigade, forming the extreme right of the Third Division, were in touch with the East Surreys and Duke of Cornwall's of Rolt's Fourteenth Brigade, forming the extreme left of the Fifth Division. It is necessary to join one's flats carefully in the presence of the Germans, for they are sharp critics of such matters. In this instance a sudden attack near Illies drove in a portion of the 2nd South Lancashires, a regiment which has a magnificent record for the campaign. This attack also destroyed the greater part of a company of the 1st Cornwalls in support. An ugly gap was left in the line, but the remainder of the Cornwalls, with the help of a company of the 1st West Kents and the ever-constant artillery, filled it up during the rest of the day, and the 2nd Yorkshire Light Infantry took it over the same night, the Cornishmen retiring with heavy losses but a great deal of compensating glory. The temporary gap in the line also exposed the right flank of the 3rd Worcesters, who were next to the South Lancashires. They lost heavily in killed and wounded, their colonel, Stuart, being among the latter, though his injury did not prevent him from remaining in the battle line. Apart from this action at Lorgies, the Nineteenth Brigade (Gordon's), upon the flank of Pulteney's Corps, sustained a very heavy attack, being driven back for some distance. It had been ordered to occupy Fromelles, and so close the gap which existed at that time between the left of the Second and the right of the Third Corps, situated respectively at Aubers and Radinghem. The chief fighting

occurred at the village of Le Maisnil, close to Fromelles. This village was occupied by the 2nd Argylls and half the 1st Middlesex, but they were driven out by a severe shell-fire followed by an infantry advance. The brigade fell back in good order, the regiments engaged having lost about three hundred men. They took up a position on the right of the Sixteenth Infantry Brigade at La Boutillerie, and there they remained until November 17th, one severe attack falling upon them on October 29th, which is described under that date.

On the morning of October 22nd the Germans, still very numerous and full of fight, made a determined attack upon the Fifth Division, occupying the village of Violaines, close to La Bassée. The village was held by the 1st Cheshires, who, for the second time in this campaign, found themselves in a terribly difficult position. The Cheshires inflicted heavy losses upon the stormers with rifle-fire, but were at last driven out, involving in their retirement the 1st Dorsets, who had left their own trenches in order to help them. Both regiments, but especially the Cheshires, had grievous losses, in casualties and prisoners. On advancing in pursuit the Germans were strongly counter-attacked by the 2nd Manchesters and the 1st Cornwalls, supported by the 3rd Worcesters, who, by their steady fire, brought them to a standstill, but were unable to recover the ground that had been lost, though the Cornwalls, who had been fighting with hardly a pause for forty-eight hours, succeeded in capturing one of their machine-guns. In the night the British withdrew their line in accordance with the general re-arrangement to be described. Some rear-guard stragglers at break of day had the amusing experience of seeing the Germans making a valiant and very noisy attack upon the abandoned and empty trenches.

On this date, October 22nd, not only had Smith-Dorrien experienced this hold-up upon his right flank, but his left flank had become more vulnerable, because the French had been heavily attacked at Fromelles, and had been driven out of that village. An equilibrium had been established between attack and defence, and the position of the Aisne was beginning to appear once again upon the edge of Flanders. General Smith-Dorrien, feeling that any substantial advance was no longer to be hoped for under the existing conditions, marked down and occupied a strong defensive position, from Givenchy on the south to Fanquissart on the north. This involved a retirement of the whole corps during the night for a distance of from one to two miles, but it gave a connected position with a clear field of fire. At the same time the general situation was greatly strengthened by the arrival at the front of the Lahore Division of the Indian Army under General Watkis. These fine troops were placed in reserve behind the Second Corps in the neighbourhood of Locon.

EXHAUSTED TROOPS.

It is well to remember at this point what Smith-Dorrien's troops had already endured during the two months that the campaign had lasted. Taking the strength of the corps at thirty-seven thousand men, they had lost, roughly, ten thousand men in August, ten thousand in September, and five thousand up to date in these actions of October. It is certain that far less than fifty per cent. of the original officers and men were still with the Colours, and drafts can never fully restore the unity and spirit of a homogeneous regiment, where every man knows his company leaders and his platoon. In addition to this they had now fought night and day for nearly a fortnight, with broken and insufficient sleep, laying down their rifles to pick up their spades, and then once again exchanging spade for rifle, while soaked to the skin with incessant fogs and rain, and exposed to that most harassing form of fighting, where every clump and hedgerow covers an enemy. They were so exhausted that they could hardly be woken up to fight. To say that they were now nearing the end of their strength and badly in need of a rest is but to say that they were mortal men and had reached the physical limits that mortality must impose.

The French cavalry divisions acting as links between Pulteney and Smith-Dorrien were now relieved by the Eighth (Jullundur) Indian Infantry Brigade, containing the 1st Manchesters, 59th (Scinde) Rifles, 40th Pathans, and 47th Sikhs. It may be remarked that each Indian brigade is made up of three Indian and one British battalion. This change was effected upon October 24th, a date which was marked by no particular military event save that the Third Division lost for a time the services of General Beauchamp Doran, who returned to England. General Doran had done great service in leading what was perhaps the most hard-worked brigade in a hard-worked division. General Bowes took over the command of the Eighth Infantry Brigade.

On the night of October 24th determined attacks were made upon the trenches of the

Second Corps at the Bois de Biez, near Neuve Chapelle, but were beaten off with heavy loss to the enemy, who had massed together twelve battalions in order to rush a particular part of the position. The main attack fell upon the 1st Wiltshires and the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles, belonging to McCracken's Seventh Brigade, and also upon the 15th Sikhs of the Sirhind Brigade, who seem to have been the first Indians to be seriously engaged, having nearly two hundred casualties. The Eighth Brigade were also involved in the fight. The Germans had some temporary success in the centre of the trenches of the Third Division, where, in the darkness, they pushed back the 1st Gordon Highlanders, who lost very heavily. As the Highlanders fell back, the 2nd Royal Scots, upon their right, swung back its flank companies, covered the retirement, and then, straightening their ranks again, flung the Germans, at the point of their bayonets, out of the trenches. It was one of several remarkable feats which this fine battalion has performed in the war. Next morning the captured trenches were handed over to the care of the 4th Middlesex.

OUR INDIAN TROOPS WORKING SHOULDER TO
A GALLANT AND SUCCESSFUL ATTACK ON

FIRST FIGHT OF NEUVE CHAPELLE.

The pressure upon the exhausted troops was extreme upon this day, for a very severe attack was made also upon the Fifth Division, holding the right of the line. The soldiers, as already shown, were in no condition for great exertions, and yet, after their wont, they rose grandly to the occasion. The important village of Givenchy, destined for many a long month to form the advanced post upon the right of the Army, was held by the 1st Norfolks under Colonel Ballard, who defied all efforts of the enemy to dislodge them. Nevertheless, the situation was critical and difficult for both divisions, and the only available support, the 1st Manchesters from the Lahore Division, were pushed up into the fighting line and found themselves instantly engaged in the neighbourhood of Givenchy. It was dreadful weather, the trenches a quagmire, and the rifle-bolts often clogged with the mud. On the 26th Sir John French, realizing how great was the task with which the weary corps was faced, sent up two batteries of 4·7 guns, which soon lessened the volume of the German artillery attack. At the same time General Maistre, of the Twenty-first French Corps, sent two of his batteries and two of his battalions. Thus strengthened, there was no further immediate anxiety as to the line being broken, especially as upon the 26th Marshal French, carefully playing card after card from his not over-strong hand, placed the Second Cavalry Division and three more Indian battalions in reserve to Smith-Dorrien's corps. The German advance had

SHOULDER WITH THE THIN KHAKI LINE.
THE GERMANS WITH THE BAYONET.

by no means spent itself, as on this day they shelled the 2nd Irish Rifles out of their trenches and established themselves firmly in the village of Neuve Chapelle, near the centre of the British line, inflicting heavy loss upon the Royal Fusiliers, who tried to restore the position. A number of attacks were made to regain this village next day, in which as strange a medley of troops were employed as could ever before have found themselves as comrades in so minor an operation. There were South Lancashires, Royal Fusiliers, 9th Bhopal Infantry, 47th Sikhs, Chasseurs Alpins, and other units. In spite of—or possibly on account of—this international competition the village remained with the Germans, who were strongly reinforced, and managed by their shell-fire to clear some of the nearest trenches and gain some additional ground, hitting the 1st Wiltshires and 2nd Irish Rifles hard and making a number of prisoners, two or three hundred in all. Again the times had become critical, the more so as the Eighth Indian Brigade to the north had also been attacked and roughly handled. The indomitable Smith-Dorrien was determined to have his village, however, and in the neighbouring French cavalry commander, General Conneau, he found a worthy colleague who was ready to throw his last man into the venture. The Second Cavalry, now under General Mullens (formerly Colonel), of the 4th Dragoon Guards, was also ready, as our cavalry has always been ready, to spring in as a makeweight when the balance trembled. The German losses were known to have been tremendous, and it was hoped that the force of their attack was spent. On the 28th the assault was renewed, prefaced by a strong artillery preparation, but again it was brought to a standstill. The 47th Sikhs fought magnificently from loopholed house to house, as did the Indian sappers and miners, while the cavalry showed themselves to be admirable infantry at a pinch, but the defence was still too strong and the losses too severe, though at one time Colonel McMahon, of the Fusiliers, had seized the whole north end of the village.

Some sixty officers and one thousand five hundred men had fallen in the day's venture, including seventy of the cavalry. The night fell with Neuve Chapelle still in the hands of the enemy, and the British troops to the north, east, and west of it in a semicircle. The Fourteenth Brigade, coming up after dark, found the West Kent Regiment reduced to two officers and one hundred and fifty men, and the Yorkshire Light Infantry at about the same strength, still holding on to positions which had been committed to them three days before. The conduct of these two grand regiments upon that and the previous days

THE ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT DID SPLENDID GENERAL SMITH-DORRIEN PAID THEM THE FOLLOWING TRIBUTE: "THERE IS ONE PART OF THE TRENCHES WHICH YOUR BATTALION HELD SO

excited the admiration of everyone, for, isolated from their comrades, they had beaten off a long succession of infantry attacks and had been enfiladed by a most severe shell-fire. Second-Lieutenant White, with a still younger officer named Russell, formed the whole staff of officers of the West Kents. Major Buckle, Captain Legard, and many others having been killed or wounded, Penny and Crossley, the two sergeant-majors, did great work, and the men were splendid. These shire regiments, raised from the very soil of England, reflect most nearly her national qualities, and in their stolid invincibility form a fitting framework of a great national army. Speaking to the West Kents at a later date, General Smith-Dorrien said: "There is one part of the line which has never been retaken, because it was never lost. It was the particular trenches which your battalion held so grimly during those terrific ten days."

These determined efforts were not spent in vain, for the Germans would not bide the other brunt. Early on the 29th the British patrols found that Neuve Chapelle had been evacuated by the enemy, who must have lost several thousand men in its capture and fine subsequent defence. In this village fighting the British were much handicapped at this time by the want of high explosive shells to destroy the houses. The enemy's artillery made it impossible for the British to occupy it, and some time later it reverted to the Germans once more, being occupied by the Seventh Westphalian Corps. It was made an exceedingly strong advance position by the Germans, but it was reoccupied by the British Fourth Corps (Rawlinson's) and the Indian Corps (Willcocks') upon March 10th in an assault which lasted three days, and involved a loss of twelve thousand men to the attackers and at least as many to the defenders. This battle will be described among the operations of the spring of 1915, but it is mentioned now to show how immutable were the lines between these dates.

The southern or La Bassée end of the line

WORK AT A CRITICAL TIME NEAR NEUVE CHAPELLE.

LINE WHICH HAS NEVER BEEN RETAKEN, BECAUSE IT WAS NEVER LOST. IT WAS THE PARTICULAR GRIMLY DURING THOSE TERRIFIC TEN DAYS."

had also been attacked upon the 28th and 29th, and the 2nd Manchesters driven from their trenches, which they instantly regained, killing seventy of the enemy and taking a number of prisoners. It was in this action that Lieutenant Leach and Sergeant Hogan earned the V.C., capturing a trench at the head of ten volunteers and disposing of some fifty Germans. Morland's Fifth Division had several other skirmishes during these days, in which the Duke of Cornwall's, Manchesters, and 1st Devons, who had taken the place of the Suffolks in the Fourteenth Brigade, were chiefly engaged. The Devons had come late, but they had been constantly engaged and their losses were already as great as the others. In each case the general line was held, though the price was often severe. At this period General Wing took command of the Third Division instead of General Mackenzie — invalided home — the third divisional change within a fortnight.

THE INDIANS TAKE OVER.

The arduous month of October was now drawing to a close, and so it was hoped were the labours of the weary Second Corps. Already, on the top of all their previous casualties, they had lost three hundred and sixty officers and eight thousand two hundred men since on October 12th they had crossed the La Bassée Canal. The spirit of the men was unimpaired for the most part—indeed, it seemed often to rise with the emergency—but the thinning of the ranks, the incessant labour, and the want of sleep had produced extreme physical exhaustion. Upon October 29th it was determined to take them out of the front line and give them the rest which they so badly needed. With this end in view, Sir James Willcocks' Indian Corps was moved to the front, and it was gradually substituted for the attenuated regiments of the Second Corps in the first row of trenches. The greater part of the corps was drawn out of the line, leaving two brigades and most of the artillery behind to support the Indians. That the latter would have some hard work was speedily apparent, as upon this very day

HOW LIEUTENANT LEACH AND SERGEANT HOGAN WON THE V.C.

AT THE HEAD OF TEN VOLUNTEERS THEY CAPTURED A TRENCH AND DISPOSED OF SOME FIFTY GERMANS.

the 8th Gurkhas were driven out of their trenches. With the support of a British battalion, however, and of Vaughan's Indian Rifles they were soon recovered, though Colonel Venner of the latter corps fell in the attack. This warfare of unseen enemies and enormous explosions was new to the gallant Indians, but they soon accommodated themselves to it, and moderated the imprudent gallantry which exposed them at first to unnecessary loss.

Here, at the end of October, we may leave the Second Corps. It was speedily apparent that their services were too essential to be spared, and that their rest would be a very nominal one. The Third Corps will be treated presently. They did admirably all that came to them to do, but they were so placed that

both flanks were covered by British troops, and they were less exposed to pressure than the others. The month closed with this corps and the Indians holding a line which extended north and south for about twenty miles from Givenchy and Festubert in the south to Warneton in the north. We will return to the operations in this region, but must turn back a fortnight or so in order to follow the very critical and important events which had been proceeding in the north. Before doing so it would be well to see what had befallen the cavalry, which, when last mentioned, had, upon October 11th, cleared the woods in front of the Second Corps and connected it up with the right wing of the Third Corps. This was carried out by Gough's Second Cavalry Division, which was joined next day by De Lisle's First Division, the whole under General Allenby. This considerable force moved north upon October 12th and 13th, pushing back a light fringe of the enemy and having one brisk skirmish at Mont des Cats, a small hill, crowned by a monastery, where the body of the Crown Prince of Hesse was picked up after the action. Still fighting its way, the cavalry moved north to Berthen and then turned eastwards towards the Lys to explore the strength of the enemy and the passages of the river in that direction. Late at night upon the 14th General de Lisle, scouting northwards upon a motor-car, met Prince Alexander of Teck coming southwards, the first contact with the isolated Seventh Division.

THE LANCERS AT WARNETON.

On the night of the 16th an attempt was made upon Warneton, where the Germans had a bridge over the river, but the village was too strongly held. The Third Cavalry Brigade was engaged in the enterprise, and the 16th Lancers was the particular regiment upon whom it fell. The main street of the village was traversed by a barricade and the houses loopholed. The Germans were driven by the dismounted troopers, led by Major Campbell, from the first barricade, but took refuge behind a second one, where they were strongly reinforced. The village had been set on fire, and the fighting went on by the glare of the flames. When the order for retirement was at last given it was found that several wounded Lancers had been left close to the German barricade. The fire having died down, three of the Lancers — Sergeant Glasgow, Corporal Boyton, and Corporal Chapman — stole down the dark side of the street in their stockinged feet and carried some of their comrades off under the very noses of the Germans. Many, however, had to be left behind. It is impossible for cavalry to be pushful and efficient without taking constant risks which must occasionally materialize. The general effect of the cavalry operations was to reconnoitre thoroughly all the west side of the river and to show that the enemy were in firm possession of the eastern bank.

From this time onwards until the end of the month the cavalry were engaged in carrying on the north and south line of defensive trenches, which, beginning with the right of the Second Corps (now replaced by Indians) at Givenchy, was prolonged by the Third Corps as far as Frelingham. There the cavalry took it up and carried it through Comines to Wervicq, following the bend of the river. These lines were at once strongly attacked, but the dismounted troopers held their positions. On October 22nd the 12th Lancers were heavily assaulted, but with the aid of an enfilading fire from the 5th Lancers drove off the enemy. That evening saw four more attacks, all of them repulsed, but so serious that Indian troops were brought up to support the cavalry. Every day brought its attack until they culminated in the great and critical fight from October 30th to November 2nd, which will be described later. The line was held, though with some loss of ground and occasional set-backs, until November 2nd, when considerable French reinforcements arrived upon the scene. It is a fact that for all these weeks the position which was held in the face of incessant attack by two weak cavalry divisions should have been, and eventually were, held by two army corps.

PULTENEY'S OPERATIONS.

It is necessary now to briefly sketch the movements of the Third Corps (Pulteney's). Its presence upon the left flank of the Second Corps, and the fact that it held every attack that came against it, made it a vital factor in the operations. It is true that, having staunch British forces upon each flank, its position was always less precarious than either of the two corps which held the southern and northern extremities of the line, for without any disparagement to our Allies, who have shown themselves to be the bravest of the brave, it is evident that we can depend more upon troops who are under the same command, and whose movements can be certainly co-ordinated. At the same time, if the Third Corps had less to do, it can at least say that whatever did come to it was excellently well

done, and that it preserved its line throughout. Its units were extended over some twelve miles of country, and it was partly astride of the River Lys, so that here as elsewhere there was constant demand upon the vigilance and staunchness of officers and men. On October 20th a very severe attack fell upon the 2nd Sherwood Foresters, who held the most advanced trenches of Congreve's Eighteenth Brigade. They were nearly overwhelmed by the violence of the German artillery fire, and were enfiladed on each side by infantry and machine-guns. The 2nd Durhams came up in reinforcement, but the Foresters had already sustained grievous losses in casualties and prisoners, the regiment being reduced from nine hundred to two hundred and fifty in a single day. The Durhams also lost heavily. On this same day, the 20th, the 2nd Leinsters, of the Seventeenth Brigade, were also driven from their trenches and suffered severely.

ACTION OF LE GHEIR.

On October 21st the Germans crossed the River Lys in considerable force, and upon the morning of the 22nd they succeeded in occupying the village of Le Gheir upon the western side, thus threatening to outflank the positions of the Second Cavalry Division to the north. In their advance in the early morning of the 22nd they stormed the trenches held by the 2nd Inniskilling Fusiliers, this regiment enduring considerable losses. The trenches on the right were held by the 1st Royal Lancasters and 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers. These two regiments were at once ordered by General Anley, of the Twelfth Brigade, to initiate a counter-attack under the lead of Colonel Butler. Anley himself, who is a hard-bitten soldier of much Egyptian fighting, moved forward with the 1st East Lancashires, while General Hunter-Weston, the indefatigable blower-up of railway lines in South Africa, supported the counter-attack with the Somerset Light Infantry and the 1st East Lancashires. The latter regiment, under Colonel Lawrence, passed through a wood and reached such a position that they were able to enfilade the Germans in the open, causing them very heavy losses. The action was a brilliant success. The positions lost were re-occupied and the enemy severely punished, over a thousand Germans being killed or wounded, while three hundred were taken prisoners. These belonged to the 104th and 179th Saxon regiments. It was a strange turn of fate which, after fifteen hundred years, brought tribesmen who had wandered up the course of the Elbe face to face in deadly strife with fellow-tribesmen who had passed over the sea to Britain. It is worth remarking and remembering that they are the one section of the German race who in this war have shown that bravery is not necessarily accompanied by coarseness and brutality.

On October 25th the attacks became most severe upon the line of Williams' Sixteenth Brigade, and on that night the trenches of the 1st Leicesters were raked by so heavy a gunfire that they were found to be untenable, the regiment losing three hundred and fifty men. The line both of the Sixteenth and of the Eighteenth Brigades was drawn back for some little distance. There was a lull after this, broken upon the 29th, when Gordon's Nineteenth Brigade, the isolated unit which had fought sturdily from the beginning of the war and was now on the right of the Third Corps, was attacked with great violence by six fresh battalions—heavy odds against the four weak regiments which composed the British Brigade. The 1st Middlesex Regiment was driven from part of its trenches, but came back with a rush, helped by their comrades of the 2nd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. The Germans were thrown out of the captured trenches, forty were made prisoners, and two hundred were slain. This attack was made by the 223rd and 224th Regiments of a German reserve corps. It was not repeated.

On the 30th another sharp action occurred near St. Yves, when Hunter-Weston's Eleventh Brigade was momentarily pierced after dusk by a German rush, which broke through a gap in the Hampshires. The Somerset Light Infantry, under Major Prowse, came back upon them and the trenches were regained. In all such actions it is to be remembered that where a mass of men can suddenly be directed against scattered trenches which will only hold a few, it is no difficult matter to carry them, but at once the conditions reverse themselves and the defenders mass their supports, who can usually turn the intruders out once more.

This brings the general record of the doings of the Third Corps down to the end of October, the date on which we cease the account of the operations at the southern end of the British line.

We turn from this diffuse and difficult story, with its ever-varying positions and units, to the great epic of the north, which will be inseparably united for ever with the name of Ypres.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST BATTLE OF YPRES.

(Up to the Action of Gheluvelt, October 31st.)

The Seventh Division—Its Peculiar Excellence—Its Difficult Position—A Deadly Ordeal.

THE SEVENTH DIVISION.

It has already been seen that the Seventh Division (Capper's), being the first half of Rawlinson's Fourth Army Corps, had retired south and west after the unsuccessful attempt to relieve Antwerp. It was made up as follows:—

DIVISION VII.—Gen. Capper.

20th Infantry Brigade—Gen. Ruggles-Brise.

1st Grenadier Guards.
2nd Scots Guards.
2nd Border Regiment.
2nd Gordon Highlanders.

21st Infantry Brigade.—Gen. Watts.

2nd Bedfords.
2nd Yorks.
2nd Wilts.
2nd Scots Fusiliers.

22nd Infantry Brigade—Gen. Lawford.

1st South Staffords.
2nd Warwicks.
2nd Queen's West Surrey.
1st Welsh Fusiliers.

Artillery.
XXII. Brigade R.F.A.
XXXV. Brigade R.F.A.
3rd R.G.A.
111th R.G.A.
112th R.G.A.

Engineers.
54, 55, F. Co.
7 Signal Co.
Divisional Cavalry.
Northumberland Yeomanry.

ITS PECULIAR EXCELLENCE.

It is not too much to say that in an army where every division had done so well no single one was composed of such fine material as the Seventh. The reason was that the regiments composing it had all been drawn from foreign garrison duty, and consisted largely of soldiers of from three to seven years' standing, with a minimum of reservists. In less than a month from the day when this grand division of eighteen thousand men went into action its infantry had been nearly annihilated, but the details of its glorious destruction furnish one more vivid page of British military achievement. We lost a noble division and gained a glorious record.

The Third Cavalry Division under General Byng was attached to the Seventh Division, and joined up with it at Roulers upon October 13th. It consisted of:—

6th Cavalry Brigade—Gen. Makings.

3rd Dragoon Guards. **1st Royals.**
10th Hussars. **C Battery, R.H.A.**

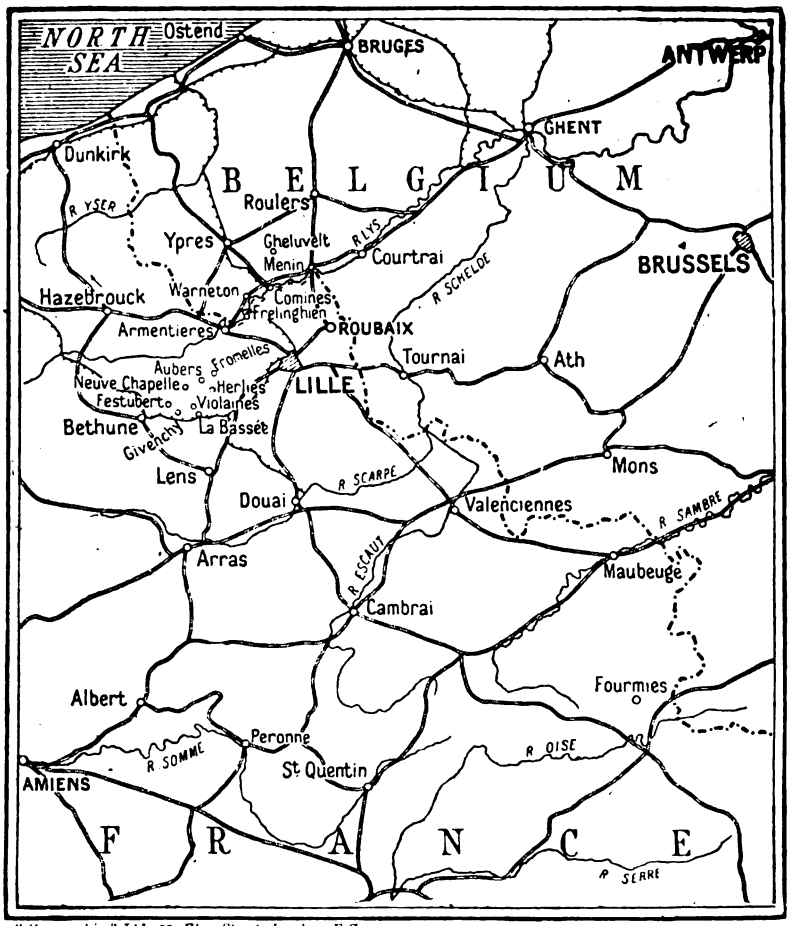
7th Cavalry Brigade—Gen. Kavanagh.

1st Life Guards. **1st Horse Guards.**
2nd Life Guards. **K Battery, R.H.A.**

The First Army Corps not having yet come up from the Aisne, these troops were used to cover the British position from the north, the infantry lying from Zandvoorde through Gheluvelt to Zonnebeke, and the cavalry on their left from Zonnebeke to Langemarck from October 16th onwards. It was decided by Sir John French that it was necessary to get possession of the town of Menin, some distance to the east of the general British line, but very important because the chief bridge by means of which the Germans were receiving their ever-growing reinforcements was there. The Seventh Division was ordered accordingly to advance upon this town, its left flank being covered by the Third Cavalry Division.

ITS DIFFICULT POSITION.

The position was a dangerous one. It has already been stated that the pause on the Aisne may not have been unwelcome to the Germans, as they were preparing reserve formations which might be suddenly thrown against some chosen spot in the Allied line. They had the equipment and arms for at least another two hundred and fifty thousand men, and that number of drilled men were immediately available, some being Landwehr who had passed through the ranks, and



"Geographia," Ltd., 55, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

THE SCENE OF THE OPERATIONS DESCRIBED IN THE PRESENT INSTALMENT.

others young formations which had been preparing when war broke out. Together they formed no less than five new army corps, available for the extreme western front, more numerous than the whole British and Belgian armies combined. This considerable force, secretly assembled and moved rapidly across Belgium, was now striking the north of the Allied line, debouching not only over the river at Menin, but also through Courtrai, Iseghem, and Roulers. It consisted of the 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 26th, and 27th reserve corps. Of these the 22nd, and later the 24th, followed the Belgians to the line of the Yser, but the other corps were all available for an attack upon the flank of that British line which was faced by formidable opponents—a line which extended over thirty miles and had already been forced into a defensive attitude. That was the situation when the Seventh Division faced round near Ypres. Sir John French was doing all that he could to support it, and Sir Douglas Haig was speeding up his army corps from the Aisne to take his place to the north of Ypres, but there were some days during which Rawlinson's men were in the face of a force six or seven times larger than themselves.

Upon October 16th and 17th the division had advanced from Ypres and occupied the line already mentioned, the right centre of which rested about the ninth kilometre on the Ypres-Menin road, the order of the brigades from the north being Twenty-two, Twenty-one, and Twenty. On October 18th the division wheeled its left forward. As the infantry advanced, the covering cavalry soon became aware of grave menace from Roulers and Courtrai in the north. A large German force was evidently striking down on to the left flank of the advance. The division was engaged all along the line, for the Twentieth Brigade upon the right had a brisk skirmish, while the Twenty-first Brigade in the centre was also under fire, which came especially heavily upon the 2nd Bedfords, who had numerous casualties. About ten o'clock on the morning of the 19th the pressure from the north increased, and the Seventh Cavalry Brigade was driven in, though it held its own with great resolution for some time, helped by the fine work of K Battery, R.H.A. The Sixth Cavalry Brigade was held up in front, while the danger on the flank grew more apparent as the hours passed. In these circumstances General Rawlinson, fortified in

his opinion by the precise reports of his airmen as to the strength of the enemy upon his left, came to the conclusion that a further advance would place him in a difficult position. He therefore dropped back to his original line. There can be little doubt that, if he had persevered in the original plan, his force would have been in extreme danger. As it was, before he could get it back the 1st Welsh Fusiliers were hard hit, this famous regiment losing a major, five captains, three lieutenants, and about two hundred men.

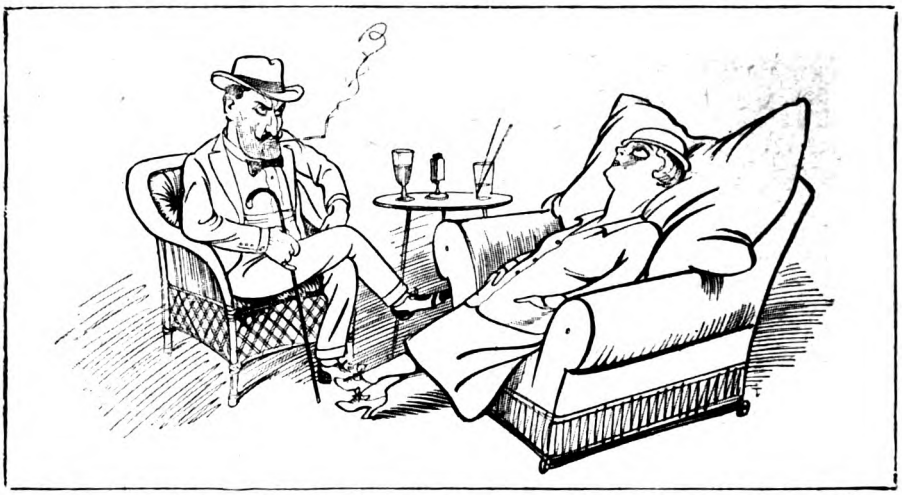
On October 20th, the situation being still obscure, the Twentieth Brigade carried out a reconnaissance towards Menin. The 2nd Wilts and 2nd Scots Fusiliers, of the Twenty-first Brigade, covered their left flank. The enemy, however, made a vigorous attack upon the Twenty-second Brigade to the north, especially upon the Welsh Fusiliers, so the reconnaissance had to fall back again, the 1st Grenadier Guards sustaining some losses. The two covering regiments were also hard pressed, especially the Wiltshires, who were again attacked during the night, but repulsed their assailants.

A DEADLY ORDEAL.

From this time onwards the Seventh Division was to feel ever more and more the increasing pressure as the German army corps from day to day brought their weight to bear upon a thin extended line of positions held by a single division. It will be shown that they were speedily reinforced by the First Corps, but even after its advent the Germans were still able to greatly outnumber the British force. The story from this time onwards is one of incessant and desperate attacks by day and often by night. At first the division was holding the position alone, with the help of their attendant cavalry, and their instructions were to hold on to the last man until help could reach them. In the case of some units these instructions were literally fulfilled. One great advantage lay with the British. They were first-class trained soldiers, the flower of the Army, while their opponents, however numerous, were of the newly-raised reserve corps, which showed no lack of bravery, but contained a large proportion of youths and elderly men in the ranks. Letters from the combatants have described the surprise and even pity which filled the minds of the British when they saw the stormers hesitate upon the edge of the trenches which they had so bravely approached, and stare down into them uncertain what they should do. But though the ascendancy of the British infantry was so great that they could afford to disregard the inequality of numbers, it was very different with the artillery. The German gunners were as good as ever, and their guns as powerful as they were numerous. The British had no howitzer batteries at all with this division, while the Germans had many. It was the batteries which caused the terrific losses. It may be that the Seventh Division, having had no previous experience in the campaign, had sited their trenches with less cunning than would have been shown by troops who had already faced the problem of how best to avoid high explosives. Either by sight or by aeroplane report the Germans got the absolute range of some portions of the British position, pitching their heavy shells exactly into the trenches, and either blowing the inmates to pieces or else burying them alive, so that in a little time the straight line of the trench was entirely lost, and became a series of ragged pits and mounds. The head-cover for shrapnel was useless before such missiles, and there was nothing for it but either to evacuate the line or to hang on and suffer. The Seventh Division hung on and suffered, but no soldiers can ever have been exposed to a more deadly ordeal. When they were at last relieved by the arrival of reinforcements and the consequent contraction of the line, they were at the last pitch of exhaustion, indomitable in spirit, but so reduced by their losses and by the terrific nervous strain that they could hardly have held out much longer.

A short account has been given of what occurred to the division up to October 20th. It will now be carried on for a few days, after which the narrative must turn to the First Corps, and show why and how they came into action to the north of the hard-pressed division. It is impossible to tell the two stories simultaneously, and so it may now be merely mentioned that from October 21st Haig's Corps was on the left, and that those operations which will shortly be described covered the left wing of the division, and took over a portion of that huge German attack which would undoubtedly have overwhelmed the smaller unit had it not been for this addition of strength. It is necessary to get a true view of the operations, for it is safe to say that they are destined for immortality, and will be recounted so long as British history is handed down from one generation to another.

(To be continued.)



"THE DIFFICULTY, MY DEAR GEORGE, IS TO DISPOSE OF POOR MURIEL'S BODY."

The Piano Mystery.

A FARCE.

By HERBERT VIVIAN.

Illustrated by H. M. Bateman.

"THE difficulty," Linda Cooke whispered as she lay back in a deep settee of the Best Hotel at Silversea and displayed her pretty little toes —"the difficulty, my dear George, is to dispose of poor Muriel's body."

"That is the usual murderer's difficulty," her husband replied, looking down his nose and proceeding to light a cigarette. "A body is buried and people dig. Or it is put into a trunk and attracts attention by its weight. Or it is thrown over a cliff and the sea washes it up. What we want is a receptacle that no one ever dreams of disturbing."

He looked the very image of a callous villain as he sat there smoking. To begin with, all villains smoke cigarettes. That is one of the conventions of melodrama. Then he had very black hair, very regular features, very white teeth, and the small feline moustache of Mephistopheles.

"I know," sighed Mrs. Cooke; "and murderers have been trying to solve that problem for generations, for centuries. What chance have we after a week's reflection? And the worst of it is, we have very little time to lose. Something must be done at once."

She was really very pretty when she frowned, so small and pink and white and dainty and gentle. What a topic to engross the mind of this dear little lady, who seemed just to have emerged from a band-box!

"Yes," Cooke drawled, "we killed Muriel a fortnight ago. Her anxious mother and her devoted young man are scouring the country. The sleuth-hounds of Scotland Yard are hot upon the track. We can't keep her in the bathroom for another week. But I have found a way."

"Well?" she cried, her baby eyes lighting up with pleasure.

"Well," he laughed, showing his white teeth, "what do you think of a cottage piano?"

"The very thing!" she exclaimed; "but are you sure it would be big enough?"

"Yes; the idea occurred to me at the Frivoly last night. There was an acrobat man who popped in and out of a cottage piano all the time. I got the address of the stage-property makers and ordered one. It will have been delivered at Marine Gardens by the time we get home."

"Then all we have to do is to take Muriel out of the bathroom and pop her into the piano. But what shall we do with the piano?"

"The first thing will be to inveigle the young man to the house and ask him to play on it. Say the Dead March in 'Saul.' Think what a dramatic situation!"

"No; that's too cruel," Mrs. Cooke protested, with a shiver. "Besides, the strings will have been taken out to make room for the—the——"

"The corpse. You needn't be so squeamish," George laughed. "I have thought of that. We will fake something up. The keys can be connected with another piano somewhere."

"How would it be to put the piano on a barrow and trundle it about the streets? It might appear outside Muriel's house, and her mother would send out sixpence to induce us to go away."

"We might try that after, and warehouse the piano. But the body must not be found before we have time to flee the country. Anyhow, let's go home and experiment. We *shall* just have time before dressing for dinner."

Mrs. Cooke disentangled herself from the big chair and jumped up with a merry laugh.

"It's just as well no one has been listening to this edifying conversation," she remarked, as they made their way towards the swing-doors of the hotel.

But she had not noticed a smoking-recess curtained off behind their chairs. Hence emerged a young man in green tweeds, a fair young man with a determined mouth and the straight-backed head which phrenologists associate with lack of imagination. Pale and excited, he was running to the bell, when he heard himself greeted by another young man, who had just pushed his way in through the swing-doors.

"Halloa, Strawbridge!" cried the newcomer; "what are you doing down at Silversea?"

"Oh, I say, Lacey!" was the breathless reply, "did you notice two people go out just now? Tell me quickly. It's very important."

"Yes; a dark man and such a pretty little woman. By Jove! I wonder who she is?"

Lacey strolled up to a glass and surveyed himself complacently.

"That's just what I must find out, now, at once." Strawbridge was pressing the bell feverishly. "Confound that waiter!" he almost wept.

"Must! Why, what's the matter? Have you lost your heart to her too? Ah! here's the waiter. What'll you have? Whisky-and-soda?"

Strawbridge turned impatiently to the waiter.

"Oh, there you are at last, waiter! Did you notice a lady and gentleman go out of the hotel a minute ago?"

"No, sir."

"But surely you must have seen them. They've been here for the last half-hour, sitting in those chairs."

"Oh, yes, sir. Mr. and Mrs. George Cooke. They're often here."

"Can you find out where they live?"

"Forty-four, Marine Gardens, sir. Been there for some months."

"That's settled, then," Lacey laughed. "Now, waiter, we want two whiskies-and-sodas, and look sharp about them, for I'm dying of thirst. Come, old boy," he added, as the waiter went off, "sit down and tell me all the latest. How is the fair Muriel?"

Strawbridge seemed stunned. Then he stared about him vacantly. Then he clenched his fists and strode out of the hall. On reaching the swing-doors, however, he changed his mind and came back to Lacey, who surveyed him with amused surprise.

"I say, old man," Strawbridge gasped, "you may be able to help me. I'm in an awful state——"

"So I see. What on earth's the matter?"

"Everything's the matter. Something must be done at once. Only I'm hanged if I know what."

Strawbridge sank into a chair and buried his face in his hands and groaned.

"Come, come, old chap, pull yourself together. Here, have a drink. It'll do you good," said Lacey, soothingly, as the waiter set down a tray.

But Strawbridge took no notice for some time. At last he said, "Muriel's been murdered!"

"Nonsense!" the other exclaimed. He was surveying his friend anxiously, wondering whether he had lost his reason.

"Yes," Strawbridge groaned, "murdered by those two fiends you passed at the door."

"My dear fellow, what utter rot!"

"But I tell you I heard them discussing the whole business in the most callous way. He said, 'We have killed Muriel, and the puzzle is how to get rid of the body.' She said, 'Yes, it has been in the bathroom for a fortnight, and there is no time to be lost.' Then he explained he had got a dummy piano such as acrobats use. You know, they take headers into it. Well, these wretches are going to hide poor Muriel's body in the piano. Then they had fiendish jests about making

me play on the piano—making Muriel's young man play, they said. Then they were going to take the piano outside Muriel's house and get her mother to give them sixpence to go away."

Lacey roared with laughter.

"I never knew you had so much imagination," he said. "Are you working up a plot for a shilling shocker or are you pulling my leg?"

But Strawbridge was pale and shivering with misery.

"I swear to you it's all true," he said. "I know it all sounds impossible. But they were talking quite seriously and I heard every word."

"My dear chap, they must have been pulling your leg."

"I wish to Heaven they were. But they did not even know I was there. I came down the stairs and went into the smoking-recess there behind the curtains from the other side. Besides, as they were going away, they said it was a good thing no one could overhear them."

"Oh, you must have dreamed it all! As though criminals would proclaim their crimes in a public place like this!"

"I tell you they did. Besides, criminals always give themselves away by some stupid carelessness."

Lacey's incredulity was having a good effect, if a slight one, and Strawbridge was less excited now. If only he need not believe his ears! Or if there could be some mistake! Anyhow, he must pull himself together and do something.

"Besides," said Lacey, judicially, "why should they have been talking about your Muriel? It's not an uncommon name. And she has not disappeared, has she?"

"That's just what I don't know. I called a week or so ago and was told she had gone to Silversea. Her mother couldn't or wouldn't say where. So I came on the chance of running across her."

"I don't call that a disappearance."

"You don't know what a bad correspondent Muriel is. She might not write for a month and her mother wouldn't worry. I've often said, 'Suppose the White Slave traffic people whisked her off?' See what an easy job these wretches would have to decoy her and kill her."

"Why should they want to?"

"For one thing, she always wears a lot of jewellery. You remember the Gould case at Monte Carlo? But for Heaven's sake let's do something instead of chattering here. Will you come with me?"

"To the Cookes' house? Yes, if you like. But it's no good unless you promise to be perfectly calm. You'll get nothing out of them if you show your hand too soon."

"I know, I know. We'll be as sleek and foxy as detectives. Come along."

They tumbled into a taxi and reached Marine Gardens in no time—a big block on the front. The Cookes' flat was on the ground floor.

A middle-aged servant opened the door and looked at them doubtfully, especially at Strawbridge, who was shaking with excitement.

"The mistress is dressing for dinner and the master is in the bathroom," she said, in a prim tone of finality.

"Tell them we must see them at once," Lacey replied; "it's a matter of life and death."

"If you come this way, I will inquire." She led them to a big, lofty drawing-room with new, expensive furniture and a *crystal* chandelier.

"Did you hear? The bathroom!" Strawbridge whispered, hoarsely, as soon as they were alone. "The wretch is already at work."

"Keep quiet," Lacey growled over his shoulder. He had made a bee-line for a cottage piano in the corner of the room and was lifting the top. Presently he gave a low whistle of surprise and beckoned Strawbridge. It was an empty dummy.

"Get in at once," Lacey ordered.

"But——"

"Do as I tell you, or I won't go on with this job."

Strawbridge obeyed with some reluctance, and was only just ensconced safely when the door-handle turned.

Little Mrs. Cooke had not thoroughly completed her toilet, but looked very sweet and dainty. Lacey laughed to himself at the idea of her having anything to do with murder. Still, the dummy piano was a mystery.

"You must excuse me," she began, smiling. "I expect I look a perfect hay-bag. But you said it was very urgent, so——" She looked round the room, gave a start, and interrupted herself. "Surely Elisabeth said two gentlemen had called?"

"Yes; but my friend had to go away suddenly. He remembered a piano he had promised to inspect."

Mrs. Cooke began to look nervous.

"But I did not hear the door again," she objected.

"Perhaps he went out by the window. In any case, it does not matter. I can see the flat just as well by myself."

"See the flat! You must have made a mistake. It is not to let."

"I am sorry to disturb you, madam, but I must ask you to let me see the flat at once."

"I will call my husband," she stammered, now thoroughly alarmed and making for the door.

"Let us call him together," Lacey returned, very politely, as he followed her out.

"George! George! George!" she almost screamed.

Then a dark face peered through a glass door. "What is it, dear? You know how busy I am."

"There's a strange man here, behaving so oddly. I wish you'd come for a moment."

"Oh, bother!" Cooke came out in his shirt-sleeves.

"Says it's a matter of life and death, and *he must* see over the flat at once," Mrs. Cooke explained.

Cooke stared curiously at the intruder. Then he broke into a smile that made him look more Mephistophelian than ever.

"Didn't happen to be at the Best Hotel this afternoon, did you?" he asked, with a purr.

"Yes; but I don't see——"

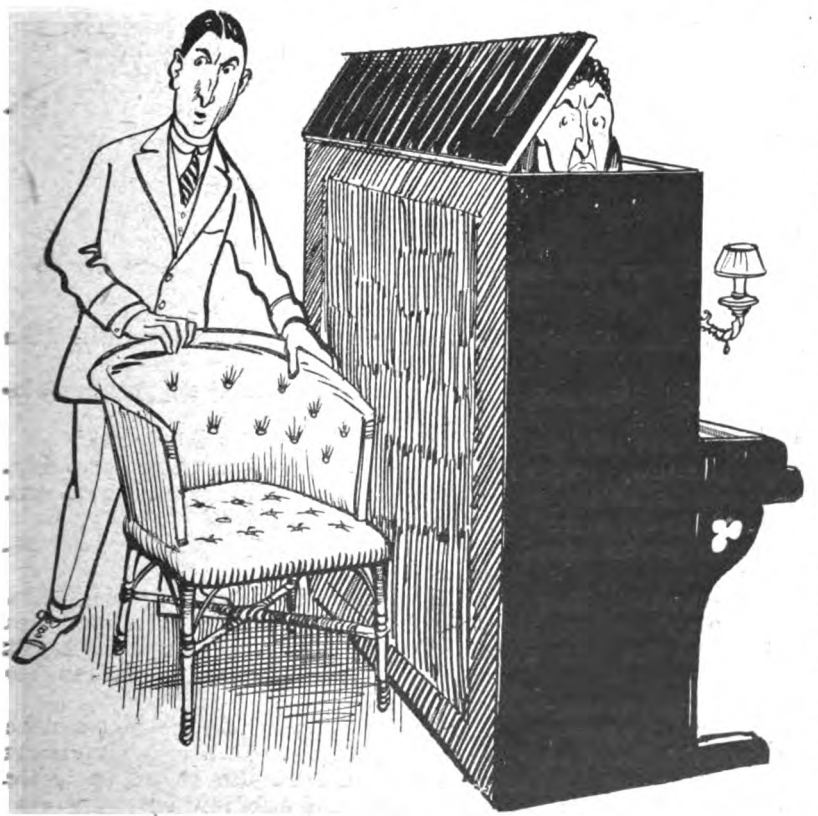
"Oh, don't you? It's a nice place. I often go there myself. Well, my dear sir, of course you can see over the flat. Go where you please. My wife and I will wait in the sitting-room for you."

Lacey hesitated for a moment, scenting some trap. If they meditated foul play, there was always Strawbridge in the piano to come to the rescue. And they would gain little by attempting to escape.

He made a bee-line for the glass door, which, as he had rightly judged, led into the bathroom. At first sight there was nothing here beyond a few hairpins and scraps of ribbon on the floor. Then he noticed some red sediment round about the bathroom plug. There were also some round red drops like sixpences on the tiled floor. They led to a green baize door that he opened, expecting a cupboard. But he found himself in a small room with bare floor, on which the trail of drops still continued, leading up to a truckle bed. This was the only piece of furnture, and he went straight up to it.

There on the pillow was a mass of flaxen hair and a wax-like face that looked as though a pot of red ink had been flung straight at it. Here, evidently, was the body of the murdered Muriel.

He rushed back to the green baize door, only to find that it had locked itself automatically and there was no other exit from the room.



"STRAWBRIDGE OBEYED WITH SOME RELUCTANCE."

Meanwhile, in the drawing-room, George Cooke was laughing like Beelzebub.

"Linda," he exclaimed, "we are in luck's way. This incident will have saved us no end of midnight oil."

His wife looked worried and nervous, but his gaiety began to infect her.

"My dear," she said, "you ought to have been an actor. What a fortune you would have made in 'Faust' with that face! But what's all this about? Was the man mad? And what have you done with him?"

"Don't you see? He's a gallant rescuer, who overheard us talking about the murder when we were at the Best Hotel. He has now locked himself into the bedroom with Muriel's body."

"THERE WERE ALSO SOME ROUND RED DROPS LIKE SIXPENCES ON THE TILED FLOOR."

"I don't see how that helps. He'll soon find out——"

"Oh, but it's splendid! We've only got to let events develop themselves. Finish getting dressed as fast as you can, so that we can go out to dinner. Leave the rest to me."

He pressed a bell and the servant came, looking as demure as ever.

"Elisabeth," he said, "fetch a taxi. Then, as soon as we are round the corner, get a policeman and tell him there has been a murder in this flat."

"Yes, sir," she replied, as calmly as though he had told her to buy a packet of cigarettes.

"Oh, George, you can't!" Mrs. Cooke protested.

"No, I can't, but she can. Then, Elisabeth, you will tell him that the murderer is that young gentleman you let in just now. He's shut himself up in the room with Miss Muriel's corpse."

"Yes, sir; but which of the young gentlemen?"

"Which of them? I saw only one."

"Yes, yes," said Mrs. Cooke, excitedly. "I told you Elisabeth said there were two. Didn't you, Elisabeth?"

"I certainly showed two gentlemen in here, ma'am."

"Then where is the second one?" Mrs. Cooke cried. "We should have heard him bang the front door, and he certainly hasn't gone through the windows—you can see they are still bolted."

"That's odd," said Cooke, looking round the room meditatively. Then a sudden gleam came into his eyes. He walked up to the cottage piano and locked the lid.

"Elisabeth," he resumed, "before you fetch the police, run round to Santry's

at the corner and tell him to send a cart and two men here at once. They are to take that piano to the cave beyond the lighthouse. We are going to have a midnight picnic there, and some of the young ladies may like to dance."

"Yes, sir; and are they to fetch it away again in the morning?"

"No, they needn't trouble. It won't come to any harm if it stays there a week or a month."

"Help! Help! Help! Let me out, you cursed murderers!" Loud muffled noises came from the inside of the piano.

"And if it makes strange noises like that," Cooke went on, "they need not be alarmed. You can tell them it is fitted with a new kind of phonograph, and sometimes it goes off by itself. I may have jerked it when I locked it just now. 'Help! Help! Help!' That's the chorus of Marie Lloyd's latest *song*, you know."

"I've got a revolver, and I'll shoot if you don't let me out," Strawbridge's voice came from the piano.

"Oh, dear!" Cooke groaned; "the machinery must all have gone wrong. That's a bit out of Harry Lauder. Linda, you'd better take cover behind that palm while I turn it to the wall. Those men will have a lively time going to the cave, unless I give it a dose of asphyxiating gas. By Jove! I believe the thing's haunted."

The piano was certainly swaying to and fro, as though possessed by wild mediums. It gave a sudden lurch and crashed on to the floor.

Cooke whistled.

"I wonder if the fool's hurt himself?" he said.

As the Cookes prepared to leave the flat a huge hubbub arose from the corpse's room. Lacey could be heard hammering like a maniac at the green baize door. From time to time he flung his whole weight against it with a great thud. Then there were wild yells of "Mu-rrr-der!"

"Do you know," Cooke whispered to his wife, "I believe the idiot hasn't examined the corpse yet. By Jove! this is a success and a half. What a lot Elisabeth will have to tell us when we come back!"

Then he went to the door and addressed his prisoner:—

"One moment, young man, before we set out for Timbuctoo. That door's specially strong, and I don't think you will break out before the police come to arrest you on a charge of murder. But if you do, you will find your friend inside a cottage piano at the lighthouse cave. Good night!"

"And how is the piano mystery going on?" Cooke's neighbour asked at dinner. "I love your idea of letting your novels write themselves."

"Yes, my dear Muriel, automatic fiction has its advantages, especially when one has no imagination of one's own. Instead of bothering to invent characters, you make real live people come to you and then just note how they behave in the various situations which happen to occur. Linda and I have had a good deal of luck in this way, but I

"THE PIANO WAS CERTAINLY SWAYING TO AND FRO, AS THOUGH POSSESSED BY WILD MEDIUMS."

think young Strawbridge has proved the best of our unconscious collaborators."

"Strawbridge! What Strawbridge?" she inquired, with quickened interest..

"Oh, just a rather foolish young man!" he smiled. "He was sitting in a recess of the lounge at the Best Hotel this afternoon, so Linda and I began to talk at him. We said our only trouble was about the disposal of Muriel's body, which we had cut up in the bathroom and meant to hide in a dummy piano. Then we went home, and I put some red ink in the bath, with drops leading to the bedroom, where Muriel lies wallowing in her gore."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, Muriel is a big doll with masses of flaxen hair—not a bit like you, my dear! Well, the bait took. Within half an hour Strawbridge and a friend came tearing round to the flat. The friend is now locked up with Muriel's corpse in the bedroom, waiting for the police to come and accuse him of murdering her. Strawbridge foolishly crawled into the dummy piano and I locked him in. Two men are going to trundle him down to the lighthouse cave, and, for all he knows, leave him there indefinitely. He will probably try to bribe himself out."

"But how did you arrange all this—about the police and the men with the cart?"

"Elisabeth, our servant, does all that kind of thing. She's an excellent collaborator, and prefers working our plots to reading those in shilling shockers."

"Won't the police be angry?"

"What if they are? She had *prima facie* evidence. A young man pushes his way in. There are tracks of blood. He is found with murdered Muriel, who turns out to be one of the lay figures for Mr. and Mrs. George Cooke's new serial—'The Piano Mystery.' What a splendid advertisement if the whole thing gets into the papers!"

"And the first young man? He could prosecute you for kidnapping him and hiding him in a cave."

"I think not. He hid in our dummy piano of his own accord, and we were not supposed to know."

"But what made you think he would follow up your improbable story about your having murdered a girl called Muriel?"

"Well, you see, I happened to know that he was interested in a young lady of that name."

"Oh, George, I think I hate you!"

"AS THE COOKES PREPARED TO LEAVE THE FLAT A HUGE HUBBUB AROSE FROM THE CORPSE'S ROOM."

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

317.—NINE-LETTER PUZZLE.

PLACE nine letters in a square, as shown, so as to give the largest number possible of readings of three-letter words in a straight line. You may use the same letter more than once, but repetitions of the same word do not count. In the example we get the words DON, NOD, DAB, BAD, ART, BEY, ORE, and DRY—eight in all. This can be easily beaten. What is the best you can do? They must be all English dictionary words.

D	O	N
A	R	T
B	E	Y

318.—THE AMUSEMENTS TAX.

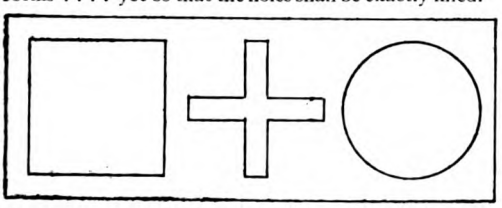
I WAS talking a few days ago to the manager of a small picture-palace, where the prices for admission are one shilling, sixpence, fourpence, and threepence. The new tax is, of course, twopence on the shilling seats and one penny on all the others.

"Curiously enough," said the manager, "at my show to-day I took twice as much tax from the shilling seats as from all the others together, and received three times as much for admission only for the shilling seats as for all the others. There were 144 persons in the audience, and the number seated in two parts of the house happened to be exactly the same."

Now, can you show just how many persons were in each of the four parts of the house?

319.—THE SQUARE, CROSS, AND CIRCLE.

THERE is a little puzzle to be found in nearly every book of fireside amusements. I find it in a little work lying before me, "Mathematical Recreations," by H. Van Etten (1674), "How to make an uniform and inflexible body to pass through holes of divers forms . . . . yet so that the holes shall be exactly filled."



The holes are generally three in number—a circle, a square, and a triangle—but I present the reader with a variation that he may find interesting, a cross being substituted for the triangle. Supposing these three holes are cut in a sheet of metal, how am I to cut out a block of wood that will exactly fit and just pass through every hole? My friend Van Etten says: "This problem is extracted from Geometrical Observations, and seems at the first somewhat obscure; yet that which may be extracted in this nature will appear more difficult and admirable." Nevertheless, I consider the puzzle quite an easy one. How should the block be cut out?

320.—THE NELSON PUZZLE.

TAKE eleven cards, or pieces of paper, and write on each of them one of the words of the sentence, "England expects that every man this day will do his duty." Arrange these in a pack with the faces downward so that they may be dealt on to the table, one after the other, in a line, in the following manner, and that the sentence may read correctly. Spell out the word "E-n-g-l-a-n-d," and at every letter carry a card from the top of the pack to the bottom (that will be seven cards); then place the next card, which must be "England," on the table; then spell out "e-x-p-e-c-t-s" while transferring seven cards to the bottom, and play the next card, "expects," on the table; then spell out "t-h-a-t" while carrying four cards to the bottom, and afterwards play "that" on the table. Continue this until all the cards have been laid out in order and "along the line the signal runs"—"England expects that every man this day will do his duty." The puzzle is to prepare the pack without playing out the cards experimentally, numbering them, or working backwards. Just take a pencil and a piece of paper and work out the order for the cards. It is the shortest way of getting the solution—when you know how to proceed.

321.—NUMBERED CHARADE.

MY 1, 2, 7 is an extreme point.

My 3, 4, 5, 7 is what the reader will be when he solves this puzzle.

My 5, 2, 3, 1, 4 is in heaven.

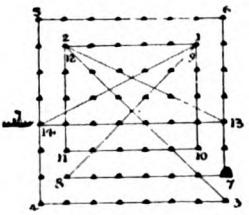
My 4, 5, 6, 7 is the earth.

My whole is a country in Europe.

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

312.—MINE-SWEEPING.

THE illustration explains itself. The numbers indicate the order of the fourteen courses.



313.—CAN IT BE DONE?

IT will be seen that with all the thirty-two pieces on the board in a possible position there are only three moves to be made—two with one of the White bishops and one with one of the White knights. Can this be beaten?

314.—A TRIO OF WORD SQUARES.

C L O S E	O C C U R	V I C E S
L O V E S	C L O S E	I S L A M
O V E N S	C O R A L	C L O S E
S E N N A	U S A G E	E A S E L
E S S A Y	R E L E T	S M E L T

315.—LAYING OUT SHELLS.

THE smallest possible number of shells is 3364. This is the square of 58, and the four triangles would have respectively 39, 40, 41, and 42 on all their sides.

316.—AN ANAGRAM.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

"AND THINGS ARE NOT WHAT THEY SEEM."

From the French of
FRÉDÉRIC BOUTET.

Illustrated by Alfred Leete.

IT was a very old lady who slowly advanced along the station platform, leaning on a stick, until she reached the compartment for "ladies only" in the express which started South at 8.55 in the evening.

As is usual with old and highly-respectable ladies, she wore a big black cloak lined with fur, a black bonnet on her white hair, a veil drawn tightly over her yellow, senile, and equine-looking features, and black gloves. An aged footman, tall and dignified, followed her, in his hands a well-worn portmanteau bearing a coat-of-arms.

The old lady stopped in front of a first-class carriage. With the joint assistance of the footman and an obliging traveller, she ascended the footstep and moved along the corridor of the train with the gait of a solemn duck. There were few people, for the season was advanced. The carriage reserved for ladies contained one passenger only.

The old lady entered it, bowed politely, and, aided by her servant, settled down opposite the other occupant of the carriage.

"Is the Countess comfortable?" inquired the officious footman. "Has the Countess everything she wants? The Viscount will meet the Countess at the station. Shall I fetch the Countess a pillow?"

"Thank you, Firmin, that will do. You can go," replied a cracked voice.

The footman went out, closing the door carefully behind him, and disappeared along the corridor. There was a whistle, and, a moment after, the train began to move.

The other occupant of the carriage happened

"'IS THE COUNTESS COMFORTABLE?' INQUIRED THE OFFICIOUS FOOTMAN."

to be Marcelle Jolliette, who was on her way to join some friends on the Blue Coast. She was the gay and ultra-modern little wife of a simple-minded manufacturer, and spent his income—five thousand a year—as quickly as he made it. Her chief characteristic, apart from an immoderate love of pleasure, was an immoderate feeling of unction and awe for title and rank.

The arrival of the dignified old lady shot a pang through her heart. The sight of the touching solicitude with which the old retainer surrounded his venerable mistress touched her to the quick, and she was exceedingly impressed when he addressed her as Countess. Instantly she resolved to appear not a whit less aristocratic herself.

While pretending to read, Marcelle was waiting for the first opportunity to start a conversation. The occasion soon arose. The old lady's stick fell; Marcelle eagerly picked it up and, blushing furiously, took the liberty to inquire whether she could do anything for her dignified companion.

"SHE EXHIBITED HER DIAMONDS AND PEARLS, WHICH REALLY WERE FINE AND COSTLY."

The old lady thanked her graciously and declared that she was very comfortable. The ice was broken, though, and they exchanged some generalities on the conveniences and drawbacks of travelling. The old lady recalled her youth, condemned the careless manners of to-day, deplored the lack of breeding noticeable in young women of the best society, and made a veiled and flattering allusion to the perfect bearing of those ladies who seek the seclusion of reserved compartments.

Marcelle felt inexpressibly happy and wriggled at the compliment. She launched into general considerations on the impertinence of men, quoting examples which seemed to indicate on her part considerable and, perhaps, excessive experience.

The old lady, however, appeared to take no notice. She discoursed in her turn, propounding sententious truisms which Marcelle punctuated with "Yes, Countess," "The Countess is right," for never before had she basked in the presence of so exalted a personage.

And the Countess having, by dint of amiable discretion, brought her to speak of herself, Marcelle chatted away breathlessly, mixing legend with truth, insinuating that she was of an illustrious but unfortunate family, and counted among her nearest relatives, both in the Navy and Army, a whole bevy of brilliant officers. She also said that she felt very nervous at travelling alone on account of her jewels. On this point she waxed most eloquent, quoted prices, and exhibited her diamonds and pearls, which really were fine and costly.

"And it is all real! The Countess can see for herself. There is not one bit of sham. I hate sham! I always say to my husband: 'My dear, anything you like, but not sham.' And I am right, am I not, Countess? Women who are *chic* must not wear any imitations."

But the Countess seemed now inclined to doze. Marcelle, more officious than ever, tucked her into her rugs with filial solicitude, drew the curtains and the blind over the lamp, and, in the semi-obscurity of the compartment, stretched herself in her corner, just as the train, leaving a station, started for a two hours' spin through the night.

Marcelle could see opposite her the majestic old lady sleeping majestically with a slight asthmatic snort. She felt very proud of herself and of the way she had behaved, and she was wondering what she could do to continue this eminently honourable acquaintanceship, so auspiciously begun. After a

time, tired and drowsy, she yielded to the swinging movement of the train and closed her weary and vacant eyes; her pretty painted mouth opened, revealing her white little teeth, and a soft and regular breathing agitated her bosom in a gentle cadence. Her charming head fell back into the padded angle of the carriage with a graceful, confiding movement.

There was a long moment of slumberous silence; the attenuated jerks of the express alone were audible. Suddenly Marcelle had a preposterous and terrifying nightmare: it seemed to her that the respectable old lady got up in the shadow, and yet, by one of those unaccountable phenomena which occur in dreams, it was no longer the old lady. A dreadful hybrid creature had taken her place—a man thin and small, yet young and vigorous, dressed in short trousers and a dark jacket. His head, strangely enough, was that of the Countess, and yet different from hers. The veil and the black bonnet, as well as the venerable white hair, were thrown back and kept in place only by the bonnet strings tied under the chin, exposing a long, yellow face, masculine and menacing, with sharp eyes and a shaven head. This apparition, seeing Marcelle's eyes open, threw itself upon her, silently and swiftly, and Marcelle, beside herself with terror, was on the point of screaming to shake off the blood-curdling hallucination.

"Stow that!" murmured a gruff voice. And Marcelle felt herself seized and gagged by a thick mask from which emanated a suffocating smell of ether, and which pressed upon her mouth and nostrils. She had a few desperate convulsions, but a rod of iron pinned her down and she fell back inert.

The creature that was bending over her was dosing her with chloroform with the cool hand of a specialist. When he considered it enough, he lifted the gag slightly, and after that, perfectly at his ease, set to work with method and precision. A few minutes sufficed him to ransack the handbag, take off the watch and necklace, appropriate the diamonds, and cut in two the precious rings. His pockets he filled with a shining booty and a packet of bank-notes. After that he deftly emptied his own bag and bundled into it the cloak of the Countess, the veil, the false white hair, and the black bonnet. Then he donned a long grey raincoat and a cloth cap.

Opening the door noiselessly, he ascertained that the corridor was empty, came back for his bag, and, after another look towards the pretty sleeper, went out like a silent shadow and carefully closed the door behind him.

The train entered a station. There was a stir in the carriages, and from a neighbouring compartment appeared the faithful servant of the old Countess, only now he was dressed in a fur-lined coat and a tall hat; the Legion of Honour in his buttonhole and white whiskers gave him the austere aspect of a magistrate.

The two men exchanged a quick glance, which told them all was well. Five minutes after, the tall magistrate, accompanied by the thin young man in a cloth cap, who carried respectfully a bag and a rug, left the station in the midst of the deferential bows of the railway *employés*.

Meanwhile, in the train, onward bound, unconscious and inert, Marcelle blissfully slept on.

Humours of a Chemist's Shop.

By A CHEMIST.

Illustrated by C. E. Montford.

THE chemist is a necessity. He is the one man in the country trained to dispense medicines. The examinations he has to pass fit him to be the one to sell poisons and safeguard the health of the community by making up the physic that will heal the sick and prevent disease.

Some American writer says :—

We can live without poetry, music, or art,
We can live without conscience and live without heart ;
We can live without friends, we can live without books,
We can live in apartments, thank fate without cooks.
We can live without books. What is knowledge but grieving ?
We can live without hope. What is hope but deceiving ?
We can live without fizz, without beer, without mugs ;
But never a mortal can die without drugs.

We have all had experience of the "funny man" who, hearing the story for the first time, rushes off to his chemist to ask for "*Three* pennyworth of 'animated stink sir of Queen Anne,' if you please." Then he will probably follow it up by asking the dear old chestnut, which I hardly dare repeat, "What smells most in a druggist's shop ?" We are supposed to smile even at this ancient attempt at humour. There are times, though, when one must laugh. One of my assistants was serving a little boy who was a bad stutterer. The boy was asking for an ounce of ipecacuanha wine, the stuff that most people can say, but are in a dreadful hole when they have to spell it. He got as far as "I want an ounce of ip—ip—ip—ip——" The assistant finished off for him with "Hurray !"

"I WANT AN OUNCE OF IP—IP—IP—IP——"

Where children have to do the shopping they often have a stumble over the following very common order: "A pennyworth each of ipecacuanha, squills, and tolu." They usually get it something like this: "A penn'orth of ippy, squills, and to-dle-do."

A chemist, besides being the confidant of everybody, is expected to possess a directory, to be a walking encyclopædia, to have a public telephone, and to know everybody and everything.

Here is quite a typical case. A lady enters and asks if the chemist will oblige her by letting her have a stamp. Then she continues, "Will you be good enough to weigh me ? I know you don't charge for weighing." When this has been successfully concluded the lady wonders if she might wait in the shop until the car comes—perhaps the chemist will look to see what time it is due—and would he mind changing a shilling, as it is so difficult to get change from the conductor? All the time she is in she is trying to squeeze out all kinds of information, from the best method of removing iron-mould to particulars of the play at the local theatre. When she has gone the chemist is just feeling ready to deal with the lady who calls to ask if he knows where the Jones family have gone to ; they used to live at No. 28, round the corner. "No," he does not know. "Oh, yes, you surely know where they have gone ; they only lived round the corner, and were sure to have been customers of yours." Still, he asserts that he has no idea of their new abode. "But," persists the unwelcome visitor, "you don't mean to tell me that you have no idea where your customers have moved ? No ; you are trying to put me off." At last he begins to lose patience, and tells the lady that he is not a directory and a postman and a policeman all rolled into one. So she fires a parting shot as she leaves the shop : "Well, I'll tell Mrs. Jones and all my other friends how impolite you are, and they won't deal with you any more." Inwardly he profoundly blesses the lady. All that is required to finish off the day nicely are about a dozen commercial men to call, or to have trouble with one of the errand boys, or girls as they are at present.

"WILL YOU BE GOOD ENOUGH TO WEIGH ME ?"

A punster is always a pest, but in a chemist's

"TO FINISH OFF THE DAY NICELY THE COMMERCIAL MEN CALL."

shop he is even worse. Here is a man who is gifted in that way. He had forgotten what it was that he had been instructed to purchase. "So," said the chemist, "you have forgotten what you came for?" "Yes," replied the man, "that's what I want." "What is?" asked the pillman. "Why, what you said—camphor. What does it sulphur (sell for)?" The chemist, unable to resist, said, "I never cinnamon so funny." "Never mind me," he replied. "Ammonia novice."

"NEVER MIND ME, AMMONIA NOVICE."

After hours, especially if the chemist lives on the premises, he is often disturbed unnecessarily. Suppose that a few friends are in for the evening, as sure as fate that poor chemist will have the bell rung six or eight times. Probably he will have a batch of pills and a nasty greasy ointment to make. Just as sure as he will have to attend to someone, the remark will be made by one of the visitors, "There's no peace for the wicked." The unoriginality of the remark makes me sick.

"OFTEN DISTURBED UNNECESSARILY."

A chemist has to do other work besides saving life. He is often called upon to take life, particularly the lives of dogs and cats. My experiences of the gentle art would fill a large volume. I have poisoned hundreds, and in every case with a minimum of suffering. Once I had a strange experience. A cat, the pet of two maiden ladies, was brought to be put away on account of its age. It had been carried in a straw basket, and, after administering the dose, I put it back in the basket and securely fastened it up. As the ladies had to go some miles by car, the shaking must have affected pussy, for in less than half an hour the cat came back. The ladies were annoyed, for they had shed tears and mourned over their dead pet, and it all had to be done over again. The second time I took care that all the nine lives of that cat had attention. Often I have had dogs with asthmatical troubles, and the dose of prussic acid, instead of causing death, has cleared the bronchial tubes and the dog has recovered.

"A FEW FRIENDS IN FOR THE EVENING."

Apprentices are a source of worry as well as amusement. The last time I was in need of one, amongst other applicants was a quaint-looking young woman who thought she would get on all right as a chemist, for, as she said, "I worn't no good as a domestic." One youth wrote, "You will never regret it if you engage me, for I am very good in everything I do, and when I was in a football club we won the cup." There is a lot to be said for one who knows his own ability.

Young ladies, even in modern England, will ask the chemist for dragon's blood to use as a love-charm. They come with all their little confidences. One young lady used to come to see me every Monday and commence the conversation, "I fainted again yesterday." It seems that every Sunday at church she fainted. I supplied the deacons with smelling-salts and sal volatile, but they became tired, and asked me for something stronger. I gave them advice that cured the fainting habit in more young ladies than the one in question. My advice was to the effect that they should arrange for old men to carry the girls out instead of the young ones, and to have matronly ladies to administer the sal volatile. That did it. No more Sunday faints under the new *régime*.

[*Probably many of our readers engaged in other businesses have had equally amusing experiences, and we invite them to send us anecdotes on similar lines to the above. Any of those found suitable will be published and paid for.*]

THE BAT.

By

BEATRICE HERON-MAXWELL.

Illustrated by Warwick Reynolds.

This story has been awarded the First Prize in the Cambridge Literary Agency's recent competition for the Best Short Story.

Brave men may fit on wings that bear them far
From out the ditch towards the shining star.

OF all the many birds of ill-fame who frequented the cabaret of the Rooks' Nest, the personality of Chrétien Fauvard lifted him above the scrambling, slouching, earthbound crowd and gave him the kingship of an eagle over lesser fowl.

His nickname of the Bat indicated his custom of making a living at night, with a sinister hint of vampire tendencies, as one after another the victims of his knife counted up to five, and made a ruddy halo round his sleek dark head with its clear pale skin and brilliant far-seeing eyes.

He had established, without any effort on his own part, a prescriptive right to certain hours at the little cellar-bar, and an unwritten law existed amongst the habitual loafers there that on Fridays they should drift away as midnight chimed from the Sacré Cœur belfry high above Montmartre, and leave a clear field for the Bat and any privileged friend who could venture to share his privacy.

Latterly, from amongst the few who claimed the favour of intimacy with this illustrious Apache, a girl named Victorine had singled herself out, and gained thereby a reflected pre-eminence over all the others, so that they called her with envious mockery La Chevêche; the men paying a certain deferential court to her, which she ignored; the women eyeing her in silence generally, and keeping a wary guard on their tongues if the Bat was mentioned, mindful of an occasion when one amongst them, angered because her *gosse* had tiffed with Fauvard and been worsted, denounced him in his absence.

Victorine had crossed the sanded floor like a panther stalking a prey, feline strength and grace in every swift movement, and standing over the other girl had said in a low, soft voice :—

"Ah, Pimbêche! You wish to keep your life? Then keep your tongue still."

For an instant Cliquette had defied her with look and speech, but both shrank before the blaze of passion, the magnetic mastery of the beautiful fierce eyes and warning hand.

"She is a devil—and I do not want my good looks spoiled," Cliquette said, in apologetic explanation afterwards. But they all knew that Victorine had no match in the community except Fauvard, and they gave her a wide berth—in case of accidents!

She had made them all sensible of the fact that she was a step above them on the ladder of beings, for she neither shared their free ways nor talked their argot, and had naught against her but a reprobate father who made her work for him, both at home and at the shop where she had filled the position of millinery *trottin* since she was twelve. With her looks and intelligence and a wonderful natural refinement, she could have gone far and placed herself well in life, but for the hobble of this absintheur who chained her down to his own surroundings.

And, seeking for him one night, she had entered the Rooks' Nest, to find Chrétien there in one of his brilliant moods, full of abandon and the joy of life. He stared at her, recognizing the difference between her and the other women at once, and she returned

his gaze with a long, slow look that carried her heart to him.

What matter if rumour credited him with the death of three peaceful citizens and a couple of *agents de police*—all stabbed fatally in the vicinity that was his special haunt?

Victorine's love triumphed over these flaws in her idol, and she had long since forgiven him for anything and everything.

The latest gage between them was the gift of a small black dog, which shared her devotion to him and would spring from the shelter of her arms straight to his knee the instant he appeared at the cabaret.

On a special Friday night in August a curious thing happened.

Two men, strangers, came in together, ordered bocks, and sat down to a game of draughts.

Jean Cerval, proprietor, standing at his bar, with a copy of *L'Intransigeant* in his hand, where he had been reading of another

"AH, PIMBÊCHE! YOU WISH TO KEEP YOUR LIFE? THEN KEEP YOUR TONGUE STILL."

Apache victim, surveyed them from behind it, and found himself unable to decide whether they were *types* or not.

One, with his head shaved, and a look of health that suggested the enforced work and regular living found in a prison, was dressed in workman's clothes—such as a newly-released convict might wear; the other, in shabby, ragged garments that had once been well-cut, might have been a valet who had fleeced his master not wisely and too well. But they seemed unconcerned with the place or its visitors, and they had money for several drinks; Jean allowed himself to feel easy about them.

Victorine, lounging at a table with Souris nestling in the hollow of her arm, gave them a scrutinizing look under her eyelashes. She was exceedingly handsome that night, her bronze hair gleaming like burnished copper, her eyes dark and soft, her lips scarlet as though the fever of youth had burnt them, and a flush like geranium-petals on her cheeks. The open collar of her blouse showed a white neck against which a knot of red ribbon made a vivid contrast.

She rose and walked to the counter, saying after a moment in an undertone to Cerval: "*Spies*, do you think? 'Tecs, eh?"

The proprietor made a gesture of indecision.

"You will close—to them—in a quarter of an hour," she murmured, with a touch of nervous insistence that made the question a command.

"But certainly. We close to chance customers before midnight always on Fridays, Ma'moiselle," he answered.

"It will be better," she said, with significance, and turned to direct another inquiring look at the draught-players.

They were apparently absorbed in their game, and neither glanced her way. One of them disputed a move with the other, and their voices and the terms they used tallied with their appearance. Victorine wondered whether the secret certainty in her mind that the Bat had broken the law again was making her over-suspicious, and was about to return to her table when another incident occurred.

The little place had been emptying for some few moments, and the last dawdlers were just drifting towards the door when a man entering lurched against them.

"*Hein!* take care where you're going," said one truculent-looking young fellow, who seemed as if he might have a knife handy. "You haven't bought the place by chance, have you?" He gave the new-comer a vehement push, and the man cannoned against another departing customer, who repelled him with equal vigour, and seizing his hat flung it into the air.

The hat fell almost at Victorine's feet, and its owner staggering towards it stooped unsteadily to pick it up.

Her quick eyes saw a rim of white between his hair and his brown neck, and in a flash her suspicions changed to certainty. This was another stranger, and the three were colleagues and were after the Bat! She was certain of it—intuition coupled with this one little piece of chance evidence would take no denial.

The man jammed his hat on and sat down heavily, drumming on the table with a glass and calling out, "Café-cognac, and look sharp, old man!"

Then his vacant eyes met Victorine's, and she smiled at him.

"That is a wise choice!" she said.

"Isn't it?" he replied, with a fatuous laugh. "I know what is good for me—I know a pretty girl when I see one, too." He pushed his chair nearer to her table and leant towards her. "What will you have?" he asked. "A sirop and siphon, eh?"

"If you like." She looked round at Cerval and nodded. He understood. It would have been a risk for him to bring her a drink ordered by other than the Bat at the very moment when his appearance was imminent. For the Bat never minced matters, and they would all incur his wrath if such a contretemps occurred.

But Ma'moiselle knew what she was about evidently. So Jean brought the orders and set them down. As he retreated again to the bar he did not see the two draught-players rise, swiftly and noiselessly, and follow him, while at the same instant the man entertaining Victorine leant forward and snapped his fingers in Souris's face, the dog barking vociferously.

The two were on either side of Jean as he turned the corner of the bar, and before he could utter a sound he found himself looking into the barrels of a couple of revolvers at close quarters. To speak was obviously death, and he obeyed the signalled directions and moved between them to the door leading to the inner cellar, through which they all vanished.

Victorine, perfectly aware that something unusual was going on behind her, did not attempt to look round. Instead, she laughed at the dog, and invited him to bark more, finally snatching him up to her face and

kissing him. "Naughty little one!" she said. "Spoilt child! Hush, and I will give you a ribbon round your neck!" She pulled the crimson knot from her blouse and untied it, passed the ribbon through Souris's collar, and made it into a bow. Then she set the dog down.

Behind her she could hear the quiet opening and closing of a door, the movement of feet crossing from the counter towards the entrance. It would be her turn in a moment, she knew, and her heart beat heavily as if it would choke her.

It was on the stroke of midnight! With every breath she drew she expected to hear the Bat's signal of approach—a bar of music whistled as he descended the steps from the street outside.

She reached for her companion's glass and lifted it, forcing a gay laugh to her shaking lips. "Shall I give it a pleasant taste?" she said.

And simultaneously a soft, low trill sounded outside, and the eyes of the man at the table changed. The hand in his pocket shot out, and a cold rim of steel pressed her forehead.

"Not a sound!" he ordered, curtly.

Souris, with a frantic yelp of delight, had flown to the doorway and stood there wagging his tail, the light from within falling on his black head and the red bow at his neck.

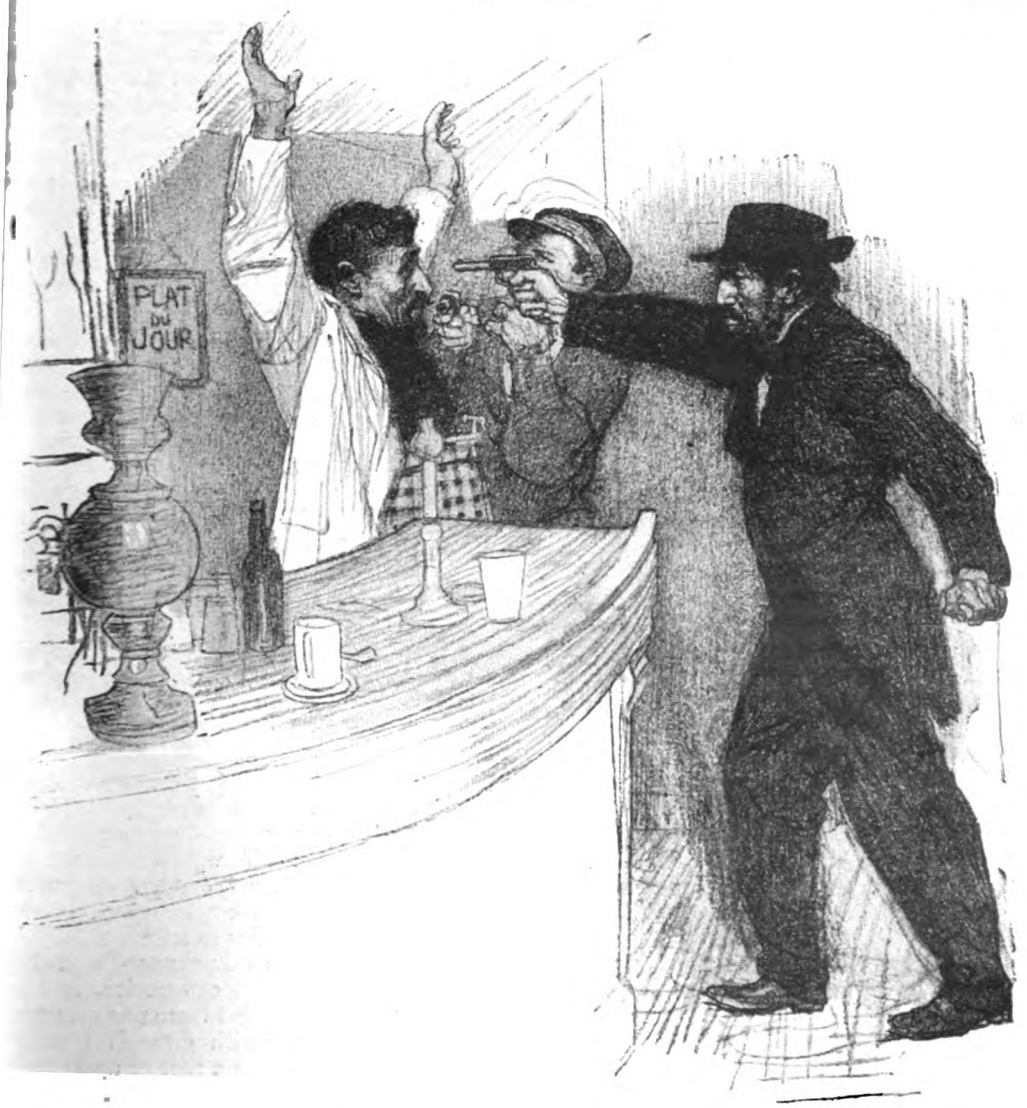
The whistling ceased abruptly; there was a tense pause in which Victorine's frenzied eyes turned to the entrance, on either side of which the two men stood, one with his revolver aiming low to take the Bat by surprise and wing him before he could escape.

Then a mocking voice—pleasant and not coarse in quality—called, "I have an explosive here—a little bomb in my hand. If you shoot or move, *messieurs les agents*, I drop it, and we ascend together."

The men looked at each other. It was well known that the Bat had no intention of being taken, and had boasted that an attempt would mean death. He had kept his word already in the case of two detectives who had caught him on one of his "jobs."

"Here is the little friend I speak of," continued the careless musical voice, and an

"VICTORINE, PERFECTLY AWARE THAT SOMETHING UNUSUAL WAS GOING ON BEHIND HER, DID NOT ATTEMPT TO LOOK ROUND."



outstretched hand appeared in the doorway dangling by a cord a lozenge-shaped object.

"Tell him you are here," whispered the man whose weapon touched Victorine's white brow. But she shook her head slightly, and her eyes flashed a vehement no.

"Is by chance a young lady of your party?" asked the voice.

Again a threatening command to speak was made by the detective, and the rim of steel was pressed tightly against Victorine's forehead. But she made no sound, though the colour had fled from her face and even her lips were pale.

"The girl is here," said one of the men, briefly.

There was a pause, and on the threshold stood the Bat, a smile on his good-looking face.

"This bomb contains T.N.T.," he said. "Shall I drop it? Mademoiselle shall decide."

"Drop it," she said, huskily.

"Mademoiselle's will is law," Fauvard went on. "I drop it, therefore, unless you —being gallant gentlemen, I am sure—prefer to go away quietly. My knife will not operate this time. The presence of Mademoiselle is your salvation."

The two at the door were still covering him, but he leant negligently against the post, holding the bomb just out of reach.

"I will give you three chances," he said. "One—two——"

The men lowered their revolvers. They knew their man and his class too well to let the fatal three pass his lips. For such a man has intense pride and vanity always, and would wish to create a great sensation and to eclipse all his previous crimes at the close of his career. The tame life of a prison-cell, the dull death of La Veuve's sharp stroke, or the still duller sentence of life with hard labour, would never appeal to him so much as this dramatic ending.

"You have won this time," said the man near Victorine, rising, and speaking with concentrated bitterness. "But we will have you yet, Fauvard."

"I think not," he answered, coolly, "unless I give myself up to you. Tread discreetly, messieurs, if you do not want assistance upstairs, for on the third step I laid a little bon-bon of this same T.N.T."

He passed in to the cabaret with a swagger, and the three agents filed out. For promotion after one is dead is not of much use, and they realized that their quarry had escaped them again.

Victorine sat quite still, her eyes fixed on the Bat, while Souris, who had crawled in, wagged an appealing tail in humility at his feet.

"A good idea—the little red bow!" commented Fauvard. "I read danger instantly." He stooped dangling the black lozenge over Souris's head. "I played my part well," he went on; "a black cardboard box with a squib in it—see!"

He dropped the box, and there was a slight explosion which sent Souris scuttling behind the bar, and made a pungent cloud of smoke. Victorine's fingers entwined themselves more tightly, but she was still silent.

Then in the haze a pair of hands seized her suddenly, and she found herself lifted into the Bat's arms, her face crushed to his while he rained fierce kisses on her.

"My girl," he said. "You saved me! I will never forget it."

It was the day year of that August Friday, and France was too busy defending herself from the Bosches to trouble much about Apaches.

One of their aviators had earned laurels for himself by bringing down in succession six of the enemy's aircraft, and since he was an inhabitant of Paris the city had arranged to do him homage on the occasion of his receiving the coveted Legion of Honour simultaneously with his military promotion to the rank of captain.

A reception was organized at the aerodrome at Buc, to which fair women and brave men were bidden, and an English peeress succeeded in annexing the honour of meeting le Capitaine in her car and conveying him to the suburban place from which he had made his first ascent.

Copies of *Le Matin* with a photograph of the hero were enjoying a brisk sale amongst the dense crowd of onlookers packed on both sides of the entrance to the paddock; for France was proud of all her fighting men, and this one in particular had won her mother-heart's devotion, because he had wrested the mastery of the air from the evil birds of prey who claimed it.

A girl, whose pale, sad face looked as though its beauty had been starved and blighted by long fasting and many tears, stood in the throng, her eyes intent upon the farthest point of approach where the triumphal car would appear.

Close to her was a *sergent de ville* keeping the road, and on the other side of the way two men in mufti sat on the front seats of a raised barricade.

The faces of these three were *familiar* to her, indelibly imprinted on her mind, and she avoided looking at them, while in her heart was a fervent prayer that they might fail to recognize hers. Flight was impossible, for she was wedged in firmly, and no one would have consented to risk their place at this favourable point of view to let her pass.

The arrival of the Gouverneur-Général of Paris made a pleasant commotion, and as soon as this had subsided there was a distant sound of cheering, which grew in strength and volume until it was a roar of applause—the incense of a multitude to a man who had served them well.

The girl closed her eyes and swayed, but with a supreme effort conquered her inclination to faintness, and opened them once more. The car had passed into the enclosure and standing up in it was the Capitaine-Aviateur, his white teeth flashing in a smile, his eyes bright with gratification, his dark, smooth head bare as he bowed again and again to the continued plaudits.

The Gouverneur-Général stepped forward, and holding the decoration began the speech that should eloquently convey the love and admiration of his countrymen, and the distinguished sentiments with which his birth-place offered him her priceless gift.

It was at this instant that the Capitaine's

"'I WILL GIVE YOU THREE CHANCES,' HE SAID. 'ONE—TWO——'"

glance, sweeping the crowd, alighted on four faces—those of the two men on the barricade, of the *sergent* standing at attention opposite, of the girl whose bronze hair caught a glint of sunshine and singled her out in the sea of onlookers.

His smile faded, and he bent a little forward.

"Pardon, Monsieur le Gouverneur," he said, eagerly, "I have a request to make to you—a favour to ask of all here before we continue this ceremony and I receive the inestimable honour and privilege about to be accorded to me."

There was an amazed silence, for the whole programme was checked by this extraordinary and disconcerting interruption.

Then the Gouverneur recovered himself and answered, "On such a day, Monsieur le Capitaine-Aviateur, we can refuse you nothing. Be good enough to make your request known."

"I recognize here," said the Capitaine, "four old friends of whom I have lost sight for a whole year—ever since the week that I joined the Flying Corps, in fact. One of them is my *fiancée*—Mlle. Victorine!"

He pointed to the place where the girl with bronze hair stood, but her hands were clasping her hidden face, and but for the human barrier round her she would have fallen.

"I should feel the happiness and pride of this occasion doubly," went on the dominant voice, "if she might be permitted to share it with me, and when I tell you that but for her I should not be here, but must have perished before the commencement of the war, you will, I am sure, pardon me and sympathize with my desire to have the saviour of my life at my side to-day. Friends, will you make room for Mlle. Victorine?"

There was a shout of approval, and Victorine's hands were gently pulled down, while kindly arms supported her tottering steps through the opening and across the enclosure to the car.

The Englishwoman, with a smile, rose and took the farthest seat, leaving the one beside the Capitaine free.

"But what a romance!" she was murmuring. "What chivalry! It is delightful."

The Capitaine opened the door, and drew Victorine up to his side.

Her eyes were lustrous with tears, but she held her head bravely with its crown of bright hair, and looked, in spite of the shabbiness of her black dress and the shawl round her shoulders, a queenly girl, not unfit to be the mate of this King of the Air.

"Monsieur le Gouverneur," said the Capitaine, "Compatriots, you know me hitherto as Lieutenant Cef, of the Corps of Aviation, but I had another and longer name, another and longer career before either of these. I was Chrétien Fauvard, an Apache, who lived a lawless life, and gloried in it. The spirit of adventure was mine, and I despised those who earned an honest living, and preferred to make one out of theft and violence. In self-defence—when on six different occasions my victims would have conquered or trapped me—I killed! The instinct to kill was not mine, and at murder I should have drawn the line, but the instinct to keep my freedom was too strong and my knife too ready and too skilful. When the war gave me the life I desired—the risk, the excitement, the danger—I said to myself, 'This is the best of all! I will retrieve the past. For each life I have taken from my country I will give them that of an enemy. For each transgression I will make atonement by saving many precious lives for France.' Those six deaths caused by my hand have been paid for by the six airships of death that I have captured or destroyed. Friends, there are men here present who tracked me down—a year ago—and would have succeeded in capturing me but for a trick I played upon them. Do you wish me to surrender to them? Would you like to see me tried for my life, found guilty, and condemned? Or have I won my pardon by repentance and confession?"

He ceased, and an eloquent pause was broken by a storm of voices that rent the air in acclamation.

Victorine put her hand to her heart and turned still paler, but his arm was round her holding her upright.

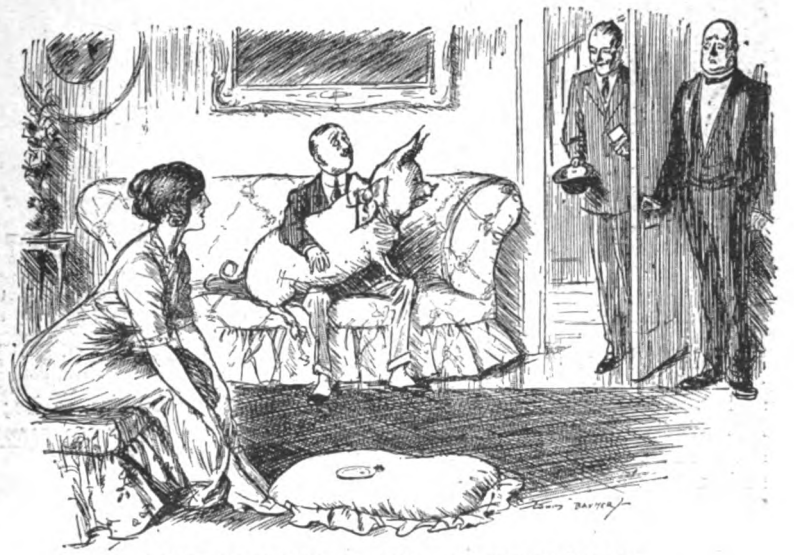
"Capitaine Chrétien Fauvard," said the Gouverneur-Général, majestically, "I have the honour to assure you, on behalf of our well-beloved Paris, that she extends to you the freedom of a valued citizen, and in recognition of your services to the State grants you Liberty—Equality—Fraternity!"

MR. LEWIS BAUMER.
Photo. by B. Park.

THE HUMOURS OF SOCIETY.

Some Sketches by LEWIS BAUMER.

VICTORIAN society found a shrewd delineator and genial satirist in the late George du Maurier, whose suave comments on the foibles and follies of his time were for many years a leading feature of the distinguished pages of *Punch*. His successor is Lewis Baumer, as keen but tolerant a critic of English society under Edward VII. and George V. as was du Maurier of the preceding era.



HINTS TO CLIMBERS: HOW TO ATTRACT NOTICE.
Be original in your choice of pets and get the fact reported in the papers.
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LADY (meeting small acquaintance): "Hullo, Ethel, so you've started one of those things?"

Ethel: "Yes; we're all having to come to them. Rather a drop-down after the Rolls-Royce, but—war-time, you know."

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The *rôle* of social satirist is not an easy one, but Mr. Baumer has all the peculiar qualifications required. He has the quiet, observant humour which appraises manners at their exact value, and a singularly appreciative eye for the niceties of costume, whether the handiwork of milliner or tailor. Above all, he has a subtle instinct for personality which can penetrate the smoothest mask and detect character where the most determined effort is made to conceal it.

Lewis Baumer is indeed well equipped to

keep a sensitive finger on the pulse of Mayfair. Watching with amused absorption the shifting phases of the great social game, he divines sympathetically the preoccupations of the eager players, and with quiet enjoyment holds them up to a gentle ridicule which even those the most intently concerned can scarce resist. There is never any malice in Lewis Baumer's wit.

"Good heavens, Ethel! What the dooce——"
"I'm very sorry, dear; I can't help it. You didn't put the pegs in firmly enough, and they all came out when I was half dressed, and my things blew away. So I'm afraid you'll have to take me home like this."

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It is evident, indeed, that the artist thoroughly enjoys the situations and the folk at which and whom he pokes his good-natured fun. Snobbery, for example, would get short shrift from a sardonic humour, and such a type as the social "climber" would be scarified with an almost savage contempt. Lewis Baumer has a gentler method. The follies of the aspirant to social distinction arouse in him no ire; on the contrary, they afford him keen amusement, which he has the happy gift of enabling us to share. When he ironically advises an aspiring couple to be "original" in their choice of pets (with full employment of the power of the Press), and shows us husband and wife fatuously engrossed with an obese porker and a kitchen cockroach respectively, we smile at the folly without anger. On the contrary, we find the scene a most engaging one. At the worst the misguided "climbers" seem only a couple of well-meaning idiots, while the embarrassed effort to appear at ease on the part of the husband, the more skilfully acted nonchalance of the wife, and the indignant perturbation of the scandalized butler produce a situation which has all the elements of farce, but is cleverly kept by the artist within the boundaries of comedy.

LITTLE GIRL: "It ain't so comfortable, but it's a jolly lot more fash'nable."

By permission of "The Bystander."

As befits a social satirist, Lewis Baumer is exceedingly happy in his portrayal of women. As a painter, and in other veins than that of humour, his charming studies of feminine grace and beauty are well known. As a satirist,

ADVICE TO SNAP-SHOTTERS.
It is as well not to walk too near the bathing tents on a windy day.
Reproduced by the special permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

no extravagance or eccentricity in dress escapes his quizzical eye, and it is the testimony of one of his own victims that there is no other contemporary artist "so awfully good at women's clothes."

Even where he points no satire Mr. Baumer shows an exceedingly nice sense of *character* in clothes. Some artists have an eye for costume, but regard the woman inside as little more than the lay figure of the studio; others, more sensitive to the lines of the human body, find costume artistically an encumbrance. To Lewis Baumer, clothes and their wearer are one and indivisible, each lending character and meaning to the other. George du Maurier drew for us to the life the somewhat stilted grace of the Victorian ladies; the alert and very up-to-date maiden of to-day receives a faithful portrayal at the hands of his successor. A good instance is furnished by the sketch in which Ethel, aged ten or thereabouts, pleads war-time economy as an explanation of her "scooter." As a type of the modern girl, the middle figure of the three is full of character most cleverly touched in.

Incidentally this drawing shows the artist's happy knack with children, for Ethel is to be seen every day in Kensington Gardens by anyone who likes to take a stroll there. And that this sympathetic appreciation of juvenile character is catholic may be seen from the sketch of two little slum girls, sacrificing themselves with true feminine devotion in order to be "in the movement." This sketch was made at the time when the "hobble skirt" was being worn. The two small guttersnipes have a proper sense of duty to their sex, and are not to be defeated by a paucity of means. Says one small girl, as she ties her friend's abbreviated garment tightly round her knees, "It ain't so comfortable, but it's a jolly lot more fash'nable!"

Mr. Baumer's humour derives its pleasant

PERFECT STRANGER: "Oh—er—could you tell me the right time?"
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charm from its genuine quality. It always holds aloof from mere facetiousness, and no matter how trivial is never trite. That is another way of saying that it is always based on observation of character, which is the reason why the artist is able to maintain at

OVERHEARD AT THE TATE GALLERY.

"Can you tell me where I can find 'Love and Life'?"

"Certainly, madam; come with me!"

By permission of "London Opinion."

the level of comedy situations which in clumsier hands would degenerate into farce. It would be an easy matter to depict extravagantly the plight of the fair bather who has had to improvise a temporary costume out of a recalcitrant beach tent, and to extract a certain amount of boisterous fun therefrom. Mr. Baumer's quiet method is more effective because so much more suggestive. The actual scene presented certainly amuses, but noting the personalities with which the principal actors in it are demurely invested, one relishes still more the *situation* and the humorous possibilities — left to the imagination, or at least but hinted in the printed dialogue — which it contains.

So also with the sketch entitled "Advice to Snap-shotters," or that of the rinking episode. It is not so

DIGNITY AND IMPUDENCE;
OR, THE RIVAL COMMISSIONAIRES.

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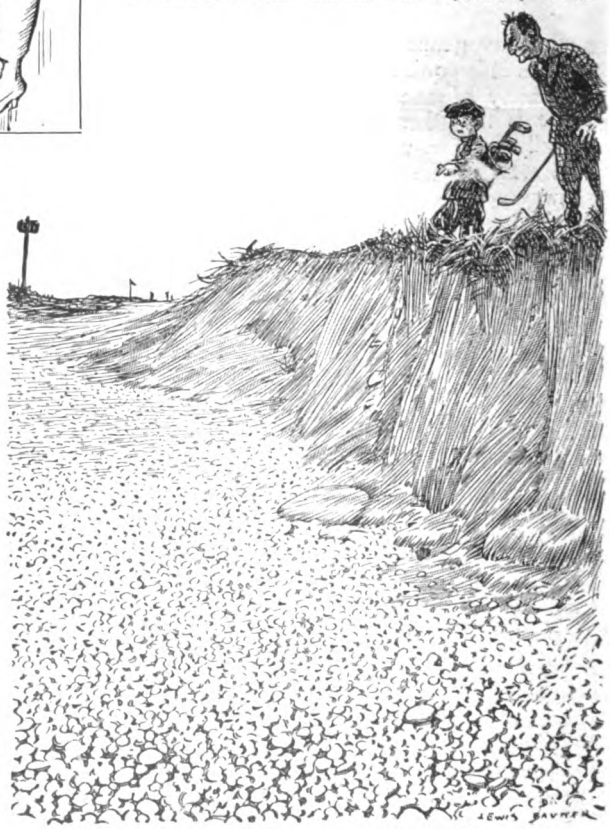

"Did you mark it, boy?" "Yessir."
"Then where is it?" "On this 'ere beach."

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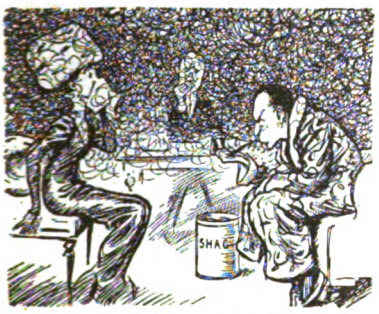
THE OLD ROOM IN BAKER STREET.
ARRIVAL OF CLIENT.

LISTENING TO THE PROBLEM OF THE LOST ERMINE MUFF.



THE INTROSPECTIVE BRAIN AT WORK

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS.

POOH! A VERY SIMPLE MATTER.

COLLAPSE!

WHY READ AT ALL? For Busy Men: The World's Greatest Authors taken in at a Glance—Sir A. Conan Doyle.

Reproduced by the special permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

much the apparent farce of the incident depicted, as the inherent comedy of the situation created, which tickles our fancy.

A sketch like "Dignity and Impudence," which if not drawn directly from life is clearly the indirect outcome of actual "things seen," delights by its ready seizure and adaptation of a new phenomenon in everyday affairs. The rival commissionaires are true to type; we know that, though we have never seen them and perhaps never will (at all events in such happy conjunction), at any moment we *might!*

And if ears can be called observant we have an excellent instance of the artist's alertness in his illustration of a brief but pithy conversation overheard at the Tate Gallery. To invest with humour the figures of two persons exchanging a conversation of which the point can only be expressed in words written underneath is a test at which many artists fail, but Mr. Baumer, with his quiet observation of character, is never baffled.

It is not always the passing show that engages the artist's humour, however. In rather different vein is the drawing of the golfer whose caddy has helpfully "marked" a ball over the sand dunes on to an exceedingly pebbly beach.

Finally, there is Lewis Baumer the parodist—a branch or department, if one may put it so, of Lewis Baumer the satirist — who displays a very pretty talent for burlesque. Mr. Punch's "Potted Films" will be fresh in many readers' minds, but these were only the latest of many ingenious travesties perpetrated by the artist. One of the most successful was the series entitled "Why Read At All?" which purported to "pot" the most celebrated authors for the benefit of busy men with no leisure for books. We make no apology for recalling to our readers Mr. Baumer's skit upon Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and a famous STRAND MAGAZINE hero. The most devoted admirer of Sherlock Holmes can hardly take exception to the genial manner in which the idiosyncrasies of the great detective are hit off. His creator would be the first to acknowledge so palpable a hit, and our readers, we think, will share the amusement, and be ready to echo a laughing cry of "*Touché!*"

THE SAFE.

By H. B. MARRIOTT WATSON.

Illustrated by Stanley Davis.

IT was at Lady Rudgwick's house that Professor Gretton first met the Count Boloski. Gretton was a man of sixty, very deliberate in manner, rather abstracted, and abominably deaf. He was clean-shaven, had silver hair, and carried with him an air of distinction. It was partly because of this that he was in social request, but partly also because of his great chemical attainments. He was entitled to append many letters to his name, including "F.R.S." It could not be said that he was overfond of social gaiety, though he did not object to an occasional plunge into London *salons*. He went out a good deal because his wife enjoyed it. She was much younger than he; nearly thirty years divided them, and she had a passion for movement, excitement, exhilaration. Her husband's position opened doors for him into various circles to which she would have had no access otherwise; but she had a feverish craving for "more," and did not realize that Gretton, as it was, made many personal sacrifices to meet her wishes.

Lady Rudgwick was sister-in-law to a prominent Minister, and Helen Gretton was glad to be at her reception. It was unusually crowded and full of fine uniforms and expensive dresses. All the Allies were represented in that room, and Mrs. Gretton's heart beat fast with satisfaction and pleasure. She had already fallen across some acquaintances, and had enjoyed herself in conversation; and now coming straight towards her, with the obvious intention of reaching a goal, she saw her hostess and a very striking man. This was Count Boloski, who was introduced by Lady Rudgwick.

"Count Boloski, my dear Mrs. Gretton, whose country has been so ravaged, you know, under those dreadful Huns. He can tell you lots of interesting things."

The introduction thus abruptly made, she left the two together—the man with a bow hardly yet finished, the woman palpitating with a sense of adventure. Count Boloski sat down beside her. He was a tall, dark man, with fine eyes and a spruce, military bearing, something over forty, and carrying an air of one who knows the world.

"You are interested in Poland, Mrs. Gretton?" he asked, in English which was almost without foreign accent.

"Yes," she said, eagerly. "I don't know much about your country, Count, but I know enough to be very sorry."

"Ah!" he said, softly. "She will come to her own—now. The Czar has promised—but you know that. It only remains to rid ourselves of the invaders. It will be done, but it will be difficult. At last we have hope—after a century—hope to see ourselves once more a nation. You can understand what that means, Mrs. Gretton."

"I can," she said.

His voice was exquisitely tempered, and his restrained glances sought her face with deference and admiration. She was arresting to the eyes. She had a slender face, paper white even to the verge of her lips, and two great blue eyes rolled and melted in it. There was something in her personality that made an instantaneous appeal to the man. She was uncharacteristically English. He talked of Poland and she listened, but all the time her thoughts were fluttering about him. He had asked Lady Rudgwick to introduce him. He must, therefore, have been interested in her. It was pleasant to her vanity; it was stimulating. His talk drifted insensibly from affairs to other matters, and began to fascinate her. She had little to say herself, but was charmed by his evident interest in her, and presently, when she saw her husband approaching, she rose. Professor Gretton had come with the suggestion that they should leave.

"Edward," she said, "this is Count

Boloski, who has been telling me most interesting things about Poland."

Gretton gravely acknowledged the introduction, and said something complimentary to the country. Boloski replied, and was interrupted.

"My husband is rather deaf, Count."

He continued his reply, raising his voice. "We have all heard of you, Professor—all who are interested in science. Your name stands very high in my country."

Gretton was human enough to be susceptible to flattery, and he smiled deprecatingly.

"I am only a beginner," he said. "I have learnt enough to know that."

"But your discovery of the L 2 telluride salts?" protested the Count.

Gretton looked at him more interestedly. "You have studied chemistry?" he asked.

Boloski shrugged his shoulders. "A little as an amateur. It is very fascinating."

As Helen Gretton turned to leave with her husband she said, pleasantly:—

"You must come and see us, Count—25, Raymond Gardens."

"Delighted!" he murmured, with a repetition of his ceremonious bow.

He called three days later. Gretton was out, but his wife was at home, and there were others present. This woman had interested him in a peculiar way, and though he talked amiably he felt impatient at the presence of others. He left, however, before them, and expressed his disappointment at not seeing Professor Gretton. Upon this, Mrs. Gretton hoped he would call again, adding, by way of explanation for her husband's absence:—

"He is very much engaged just now—Government work, you know."

Count Boloski, it appeared, was aware of this. "I remember you have a Scientific Committee to advise the Government—a very wise proceeding, and Professor Gretton's help would be invaluable."

Nevertheless, when he called again, Gretton was away. Boloski, while appearing to regret this, was in reality quite satisfied with the situation. The woman exercised on him a curious fascination. That pallid face provoked him, and the indications he thought he detected of a latent passionate nature stimulated him. He was more than usually entertaining, and even ventured on more familiar ground than had been reached previously in his more formal politeness. Helen Gretton talked of their house in Kent, of the great laboratory, of the gardens.

"But it is rather dull sometimes," she said, interrupting her note of satisfaction. "One misses town life. Things are so stuffy in the country."

"Stuffy!" he repeated, unable to follow this piece of English colloquialism. "Ah, *triste*. I understand. Yes, I am a metropolitan like yourself. I enjoy London, I enjoy Paris. I would enjoy Moscow if—when it is really ours."

Mrs. Gretton gently sympathized. She looked upon him as an exile from a land overrun with brutish barbarians and laid waste. He spoke about his estates.

"A German general lives in my *château*, and drinks my wine, and tramples my gardens underfoot. But Time holds the balance, and the scales will dip."

On his third call he was fortunate enough to see the Professor, who received him amiably. There was some little chemical talk, and Gretton received several delicate compliments. But it tried the Pole to have to shout into ears things that should of their very nature be conveyed with subtle intonation. It was like using a megaphone for a violin.

During the next few weeks the Count dropped in fairly often, and sometimes found his hostess alone. On one or two occasions he met Gretton, and there was more chemical talk. The savant was agreeably surprised by the extent and resources of the Count's knowledge, and showed himself very friendly. Meanwhile Mrs. Gretton had become so much involved in interest with her new and distinguished acquaintance that when the time arrived for their departure into Kent she was quite dismayed. Then she had an impulse.

"You like Count Boloski, Edward. Shall we ask him down for a few days? He is very agreeable company."

Gretton assented. "Yes, he's intelligent. If you would like to, why, certainly. But I've no doubt he's booked up."

It was approaching the end of July, but the Count was not booked up; and a little later he went down to Felhurst for a few days. He went for a few days, but he stayed for more than a week, and this narrative explains how his stay came to an end.

Professor Gretton was busier in Kent than he had been in London, but the business that engrossed him was rather different. At Felhurst he had his great laboratory, and he always retired to the quiet country to devote himself to any important piece of work. Of course he had his laboratory at the college, which he used in town, but he preferred his own. It was really a fine and

a finely-equipped extension of the rather ugly square house. The utilitarian laboratory broke the unified stolidity of its aspect, and even imported into the atmosphere a suggestion of picturesqueness, of romance. Yet within the chambers of the living house, and along the passages, there was no footfall of romance. The Grettons lived an amiable life of pedestrian conjugality. But there was come now an irruption on the calm domesticity in the person of this fascinating Pole. Gretton was content to leave his wife to her own devices, and his guest to her. He was a shrewd man when he turned his attention to anything, but the trouble was that he thought so few things worth attention. In the domain of politics he was a stranger; he adventured docilely, as has been explained, into social affairs, but his one passion was chemistry.

There were some interesting views and walks in the neighbourhood of Felhurst, and it seemed that the Count was interested in historical traditions. Mrs. Gretton was his cicerone, and he was a delightful companion, with a respectful admiration flashing from his fine eyes on occasion. The dead white of Mrs. Gretton's face fascinated him. He had speculated often as to her story. How came she to marry this dryasdust? The dryasdust was little in the way. In his veins no real blood ran, and the Count considered himself excused for philandering on that account, if on no other. As a matter of fact, he recognized no bounds to his actions save those which might occur to him as useful or advisable. On one occasion, which marked a stage in this development, they were all three upon an expedition. It was a beautiful evening, and Professor Gretton, who had been hard at work for days, was induced to accompany them to a Roman earthwork in the neighbourhood. Professor Gretton was interested in antiquities, and knew a good deal about them, so that he was able to entertain his guest, who was quick to express his appreciation. Returning towards dusk, they were walking in a narrow lane, sunken as if it had been a Devon lane, and, as it chanced, the Count was a little behind with Mrs. Gretton. Professor Gretton had seemingly fallen into a muse, and walked with his hands behind him, gazing upon the ground. A motor-car came suddenly flying along the lane, and Mrs. Gretton and her companion stepped aside on the noise of its approach. The Professor was in the centre of the road, and the horn of the oncoming car, driven rather recklessly, hooted loudly. But he did not move. It hooted more loudly still, and the driver made no attempt to alter his course, as it was obvious that no one who was not stone-deaf could avoid hearing it. Unfortunately, though not stone-deaf, Professor Gretton was very deaf, and his mental abstraction completed his inattention to the warning. Mrs. Gretton screamed, and the Count, taking in the situation, jumped agilely forward and, with an abrupt movement of his hands, whirled the imperilled man away. The car shot by them so closely as to brush his arm.

Gretton looked up bewildered, and then understood.

"That was a shave," he said. "I owe you many thanks, Count. If I had my way I'd send ruffians like that to prison every time. Many thanks," he repeated, as he stooped to pick up his hat, that had been knocked off. Mrs. Gretton's thanks also gushed out.

"How dreadful! If Edward had—— It was only your action saved him—so prompt. I don't know how we can thank you, Count."

"By recovering our equilibrium," said he, smiling.

But, though the equilibrium was recovered, the gratitude endured. It was pleasant to have a beautiful woman grateful, and the Count allowed himself to press his advantage. The tie between husband and wife was an unheroic tie, and he had no doubt as to the possibility of its disintegration. He had hardly before been aware of the extent of the Professor's deafness. But now it interested him. His conversation with Mrs. Gretton never reached Gretton's ears. With his general abstraction added he lived aloof even at table, and very swiftly Boloski fell into small familiarities with his hostess. Seizing a chance which had started in a compliment, he called her Guinevere, and she did not resent it. It was done delicately, even charmingly, and Mrs. Gretton had fallen so under the influence of this cosmopolitan that she was even gratified.

Count Boloski had welcomed the incident of the motor-car for two reasons, and he was justified in both his expectations. He had engaged Mrs. Gretton's sympathies deeply, and he had crossed the gap which he had sensibly felt to yawn between him and Gretton. The Professor, recognizing what he owed, sloughed his temperamental reserve by an effort. He talked chemistry when it was required of him, and found an intelligent listener. Boloski it was who drew the conversation towards explosives. He knew something about explosives in an amateur way, he said, modestly.

"JUMPING AGILELY FORWARD, HE WHIRLED THE IMPERILLED MAN AWAY."

"The romance of explosives may seem an odd phrase, but there is really something in it. Think of the procession from crude black powder onwards to gun-cotton, cordite, lyddite, T.N.T."

Gretton nodded. He was evidently interested—if only in his own thoughts.

"And why should T.N.T. be the end?" pursued the Count. "There is no last word in discovery."

"No," said Gretton, and smiled a little. "There is no reason to suppose it is the end."

He was obliging enough that same afternoon to invite his guest to an inspection of his laboratory, an invitation eagerly accepted. There was a good deal to explain in the experiments in progress there, and the explanation fell on understanding ears.

"And this?" inquired the Count at last, indicating a number of retorts, glasses, acids, and other apparatus upon a table.

The Professor smiled. "It is concerned with certain researches I have just completed."

He rather abruptly brought the inspection to a close, and the Count went out to join his hostess. He had so far advanced in her favour now that he had dropped many of his precautions. What was he there for? he asked himself more than once. It had been better that his purpose should be single. As it was he was divided. Across the table and elsewhere in Gretton's presence he talked to the woman almost without reserve, and she had thrills and tremors at his audacity. The Professor's deafness was an adequate protection for him.

Once, when he had come in from a walk and found his hostess at tea alone, he referred to his visit to the laboratory, and to Gretton's great reputation.

"I suppose," he said, lightly, "that the Professor has many discoveries which he is too unworldly to put to commercial use?"

Mrs. Gretton didn't know anything definite about his discoveries.

"He is always at work," she said. "His services are greatly valued. Of course, he registers all his experiments. He has a huge safe in which he keeps everything of that sort."

"In his laboratory, of course?"

"No; it's in his study, the room off the laboratory. It's a big thing, specially made for him. He has all his private papers and other things there. More tea, Count?"

The Count would have some more tea, and he pursued the conversation, idly, disinterestedly.

"Oh, Edward is really very careful—as careful as he is over his experiments. No one is allowed to touch his safe. He keeps the keys on his watch-chain. There are three locks—what do you call them? I forget the name."

Count Boloski could not suggest a name. That night they had a very pleasant dinner, with the squire and his wife and daughter, and one or two others. The Count seemed struck by the beauty of Miss Allinson, and paid her much polite attention. Mrs. Gretton was at first pleased by the reflected distinction of her guest, then bewildered, and finally irritated. She had been used to his devoted homage. Was it now to go to Miss Allinson, whom she considered insipid?

When the Professor had temporarily retired to his laboratory later the Count made amends.

"A charming girl, but——"

She hung on the "but." He shrugged his shoulders.

"Do you like veal, Mrs. Gretton?"

She laughed happily. "It happens to be the one thing I can't eat."

"Nor can I," he said, with a look from under his heavily-bushed eyes. "I like nothing immature."

"And I am going to give you lamb and green peas to-morrow. At least, the cook is."

He waved aside with an expressive hand all thoughts of food, and began on "Guinevere." He knew passages of Tennyson by heart, and he focused his talents on her. Mrs. Gretton experienced once more the curious thrill which was now familiar, but which was nevertheless always alarming—and delightful.

Count Boloski had come to the conclusion that the time was nearly ripe. If he had gone on quoting Tennyson he might have added:—

And Modred said, "The time is near at hand."

Mrs. Gretton exercised an unaccountable fascination for him, but that, of course, was a secondary matter. He was used to a sexual triumph. There was more difficult work before him.

The study, into which the Count had never been invited, was a room off the laboratory, with a door giving on a little lawn and the garden beyond. He saw it for the first time one day when Gretton was paying a visit to town, entered it quietly, and took in its features. There was in reality little of the study about it. It was sparely furnished with writing bureau and chairs, bookshelves on three walls, and a commercial file for correspondence. But the most prominent feature in the room was a huge safe, which occupied almost the whole of one side and stood at least six feet high. This drew his eyes after he had discarded the files. What he wanted was securely held within the safe.

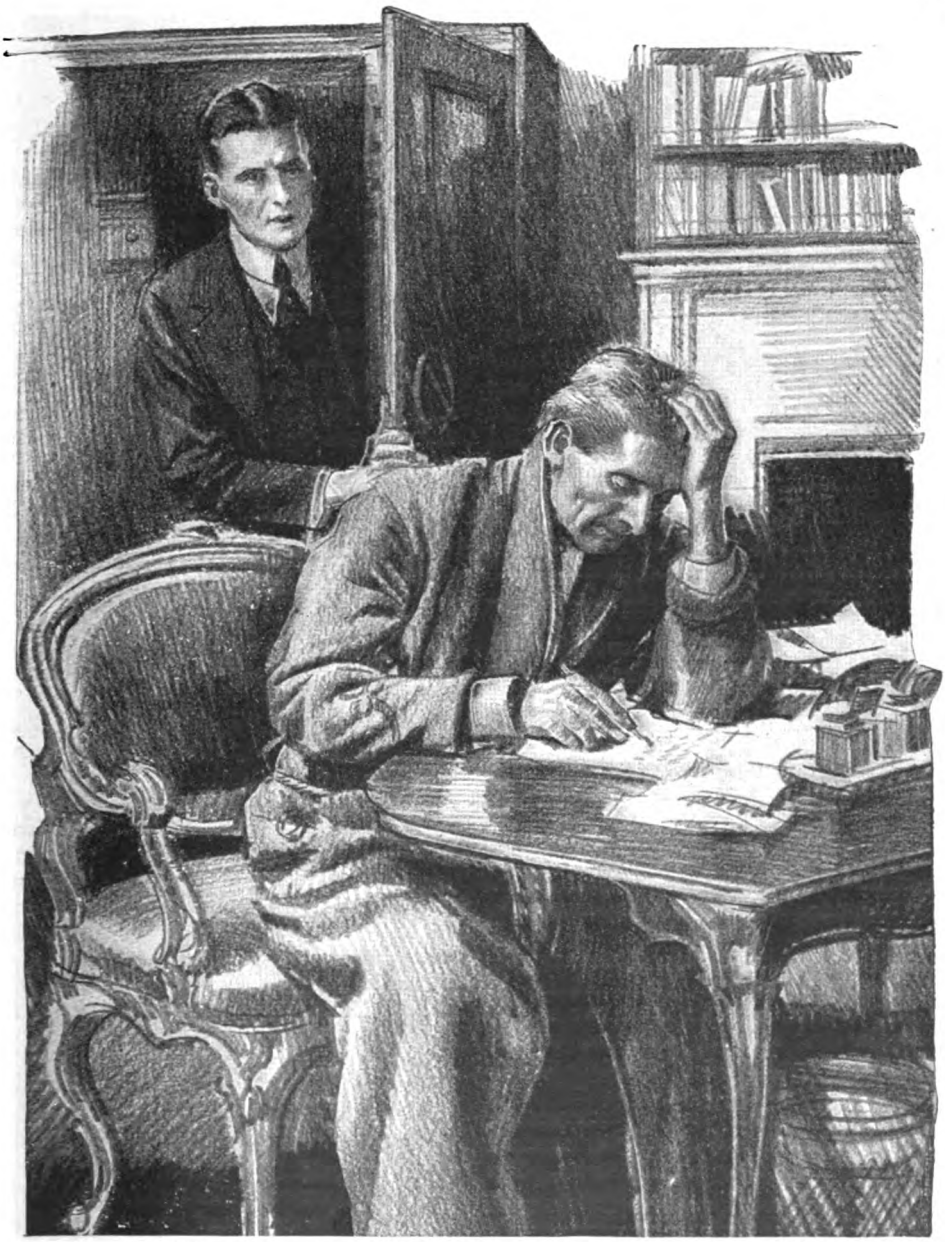
This is not a story of intrigue, but the story of an incident. Professor Gretton, one of the foremost chemists of the day, had discovered a new explosive mixture, and vague rumours of it had gone about. It was, of course, a profound secret, and the Government had bought it up. It was the evening after the Count had had a cursory glance at the study that Mrs. Gretton's emotional defences were battered down, as it had been by a much greater explosive.

He held her hand, called upon Heaven to witness, talked of affinity, and the right of living one's own life. She was shattered and shaken, and spent a miserable night, a day thereafter with intermittent moods and thrills. What did it all mean?

He left her in no doubt later. He had been out most of the day making certain preparations, and he had gone as far as Masling, a town ten miles away, where he had given instructions to the proprietor of a garage. At dinner he was a spirited companion, and made handsome recognition of the hospitality shown him. "But I have trespassed too grossly on your indulgence," he said. "The charm of Felhurst has made a bore of me. I shall always be deeply in your debt, and can never repay the principal, though I hope always to be ready with my interest."

It appeared that he must leave for town on the morrow, and though he civilly expressed regret Professor Gretton was obviously not disturbed by the news. He withdrew himself later to his laboratory, and the Count was left with Mrs. Gretton.

"I am going to-morrow," he said, advancing swiftly towards her. "But I am not going



"BOLOSKI PUSHED THE NOISELESS DOOR OPEN AND PEERED OUT."

alone. I am going back to Poland, to my unhappy country, but I'm not going alone. You understand?"

She avoided his burning eyes, and faltered. "No—no," she said.

"Listen. I shall have a car here at the gates at four o'clock in the dawn. You must join me there. I shall be in the study. We can leave by the door upon the lawn."

He was gone before she could answer, but he left her in the full confidence of her passive obedience. He had had considerable experience of women.

The household had retired early, and it was only just eleven when Professor Gretton left his laboratory and went upstairs with his keys. Upon a table near his bed was a decanter containing whisky, a glass, and a siphon of soda. They stood in readiness for his nightcap, which was his invariable

practice. He slowly made the mixture, disposed of it as deliberately, and undressed, throwing his clothes over a chair. He slept soon, and his sleep was as deliberate as all other processes in his life.

Shortly after one o'clock, when a few stars reigned in the sky, Count Boloski stole from his room, where he had been busy with preparations, and listened at the door. He was in a lounge suit, and he carried in his hand a small electric torch. He listened to the unbroken silence of the sleeping house. Then he passed noiselessly along the corridor till he had reached the door of Professor Gretton's room. This he opened softly, and stayed to listen once more. Silence enwrapped everything and darkness enfolded all. He switched on his torch and the light sprayed the contents of the room. At the farther end it illuminated dimly a bed, and towards this Boloski made his furtive way. Professor Gretton lay sleeping like a child, and the Count looked down on him with a smile.

"He wouldn't hear if I fell over the fire-irons," he said, almost with a sneer.

Then he turned his attention to the discarded clothes on the chair—to the watch and chain, and all that was attached to it on the dressing-table. He made up his mind quickly about the keys, but, as there were several, to save time he took the bunch. Moreover, it was well to be on the safe side. He passed out of the room as noiselessly as he had entered, closed the door, and descended the staircase.

Outside the door of the laboratory he paused to find the key. It turned in the lock, and he entered. The same key opened the study, and then he switched on the electric light of the room in order to inspect the great safe more narrowly.

From the look of the locks, which were of a special make, he had already determined the keys, and he now applied them. The door swung open readily; it was hung perfectly, and answered to a touch. Boloski peered in. The safe was divided into two parts—one full of shelves in which documents and files of all kinds were collected; but the other half was clear and fitted with a small projecting shelf, on which rested a packet. He switched off the room light and entered, and with the light of his own torch examined this. It rendered him nothing of interest. He thereupon gave his attention to the files which were stowed in pigeonholes, and diligently searched for letters which might cover the object of his inquiry. He was quite half an hour in these investigations before he reached what seemed to be what he wanted.

Professor Gretton, with a somewhat uneasy sense of a light on his face, woke up and stared into perfect darkness. He closed his eyes again, but unfortunately a problem in chemistry which had worried him in the laboratory re-entered his mind and worried him again. The formula was wrong. He was sure of that. It pursued and persecuted him. Sleep fled as a mist disperses before the risen sun. He got up, switched on the light, threw on his dressing-gown, and got into his slippers. He would look through the formula again; the reaction had been wrong.

He went downstairs and found his laboratory door ajar, which made no impression on his engaged mind. That the study door also was open reinforced something in his subconsciousness, and made him vaguely uneasy. But at the sight of his desk this was only transient. He slipped into his chair, found his papers, and began a reconsideration of them.

Count Boloski, inside the safe, had heard the approaching footsteps and had swung the heavy door lightly to, till but a crack was open. He put out his torch and waited in suspense. The man at the desk stirred in his chair, rustled his papers, and his pen scratched as he made alterations in his notes. Boloski pushed the noiseless door open and peered out. Professor Gretton sat with his back to him, humped up in his dressing-gown, and the light flooded the room. Gretton stirred, shifted in his chair, and rose. As he did so the Pole softly pulled the door to its previous position.

Gretton stood for a moment in thought. Things were running through his head. He was tempted to go into the laboratory to try the other acid. He turned towards the safe, where so many of his registers were kept, looked at the door, and remembered that he had not brought his keys. But the laboratory and the study were open!

This fact flashed upon him for the first time, and left him puzzled. He approached the safe and examined it with a frown. How could he have left the doors open? He was in physical contact with the steel doors now, and there was a little click. He was deaf and did not hear.

He withdrew and went out into the laboratory, switching on the light. Then he went to his jars and retorts at the farther end.

"'I SHALL BE GLAD WHEN HE'S GONE,' SAID MRS. GRETTON, HOARSELY."

After half an hour's work he returned to the study, took his seat at the table, and resumed his notes. He had got what he wanted. He sat for twenty minutes, and then there came to his inner senses an impression of disturbance. He glanced up involuntarily, and listened. There was a sound somewhere. It must come from without. He redirected his attention to his paper, and went on with his notes.

The great heavy steel door of the safe had clicked into its place under the slight pressure of Gretton's touch. For a moment or two Boloski waited in silence in his cramped position within, and then he ventured to put forth a hand and explore. He felt the door, and pushed it. It stood firm and unyielding, and after he had made several attempts he abandoned them in despair. Then he turned on his torch and examined his surroundings. On all sides of him was the terrible prison of steel. He shuddered, switched off the light in order not to waste it, and began a dispassionate review of his situation. Release was impossible except from without. He would have to wait until Mrs. Gretton arrived, attract her attention by knocking, and so be liberated. He was a man of iron resolution, or he would not have been what he was—one of the ablest spies ever employed by the Germans; and he made himself as comfortable as was possible in the cramped space at his command. Presently, however, he became conscious of an oppression, which seemed to increase. There was a choking sensation in his throat, and he drew breath in a laboured way. The feeling disconcerted him, and as he set his wits to work to discover the reason it came upon him with a startling flash that the safe was air-tight, and that his supply of atmosphere was confined to the contents of the safe. The thought penetrated to his inmost being with a terrible chill. If he could not manage to get the door open he would die of suffocation. How long—how long? As he drew in a shuddering inspiration of the vitiated air he flung himself on the steel wall and began to hammer with his torch. He hammered and he cried aloud. His voice came back to him from the wall. He cried out louder—he screamed. Someone must hear him—it mattered not who it was. He was blind to all thought of detection and capture. He wanted to be detected. Suffocation! He could have faced death in other forms, but this slow strangulation—— He dashed upon the steel and screamed.

Professor Gretton turned in his chair. There was a noise somewhere. But he was deaf, and he could make out neither its quality nor its direction. He opened the door to the lawn, and listened. It was a rumble only that reached his deaf ears.

"Probably an aeroplane," he reflected, and then, with a little touch of alarm, "A Zeppelin!" He looked up into the clear sky, and shook his head. "No, not on a night like this."

He went back into the study, cleared up his papers, yawned, and, passing into the laboratory, locked the door. Something was still drubbing in his head, but he had given it up. Perhaps it was the guns at the camp.

On his way to his room he paused outside his wife's door and, seeing a light under it, went in. Mrs. Gretton, who was seated in a chair near the bed, rose with a little cry. She had taken off her frock and thrown a dressing-gown over her deshabille. Her husband did not notice this.

"My dear," he said, "did you hear any noises? Is that why you are up? I think it must be either the guns at Wayford Camp or aeroplanes."

"No," she said, rather tremulously. "I heard nothing."

"Ah, well; it may have been traction-engines or motor-lorries on the road." He became aware that it was odd for her to be up at that time of night. "Couldn't you sleep?"

"No, I have rather a headache."

"I'm sorry, my dear. Better get to bed. It will pass off. Our guest will be off early, so you must get some sleep. I'm——" he paused, "I'm rather glad he's going. He's a persistent man, but agreeable—agreeable."

"I shall be glad when he's gone," said Mrs. Gretton, hoarsely.

He put his hand lightly on her arm, and she took it in hers.

"Good night, Edward."

When he had gone she stared at the wall, unseeing. In an hour's time or so Count Boloski would be waiting for her in the study—his car at the end of the avenue. She rose, went to the door, and turned the key. Then she undressed and went slowly to bed. Noises! There was only the noise in her own mind, which drummed loudly. She closed her eyes, and waited. It was four o'clock when she passed off into troubled sleep.

ACROSTICS.

The Beginning of a New Quarter.

Prizes to the value of ten guineas are offered for solutions of the six acrostics published during the quarter.

Answers to Acrostics 13 *and* 14 *should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor,* THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C., and must arrive not later than by the first post on September 6th.*

Two answers may be sent to every light.

The two solutions should be written on separate pieces of paper, and each must be signed with the solver's pseudonym.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 13.

Soon fades the season's heat away,
Soon comes a cooler season's sway.

1. There go the ships—with steam or sail.
2. A classic bear without a tail.
3. It is not right, but rhymes with it.
4. Abroad it is a little bit.
5. A town that tells of salt or race.
6. Cathedral town, historic place.

PAX.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 14.

Two gay resorts on southern coast
Mid pleasure's haunts are still the boast.
The first, raised high in Regent's days,
From fashion's votaries still wins praise.
The second from invading host
Of old did guard our English coast.

1. Essential this to you and me,
   Without it we should cease to be.
2. A building round, complete it stands,
   Pantheon, famed in many lands.
3. Double this light, and you will find
   A stream brings classic towers to mind.
4. In English tongue this tells of pain,
   In French a sense of taste we gain.
5. A shout behind makes you look round,
   A startling force is in the sound.
6. Disloyalty to king and state
   Surely deserves a damning fate.
7. This giant king, if I'm not wrong,
   A bedstead had, nine cubits long.
8. In classic language here we see
   Ourselves—'tis we, and only we.

M. S. H.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 11.

1.	D	ecide	D
2.	U	ckn	O
3.	R	ide	R
4.	H	eracle	S
5.	A	malekit	E
6.	M	otmo	T

NOTES.—Light 1. Decided, agreed; the Cid, in the word "deed." 2. Lucknow. Luck, fortune; now, at present. 3. A man who rides; Rider Haggard, author of *She*; a geometrical problem. 4. One letter less than "her ancles." 5. A male kite. 6. Mot, a word: the sawbill.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 12.

1	C	arecro	W
2.	O	ll	A
3.	W	ai	L
4.	L	abia	L
5.	E	pistl	E
6.	Y	ria	R

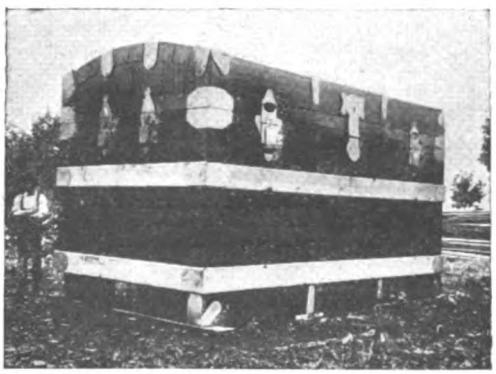
NOTES.—Light 1. Scarecrow, the black tern. 2. Sheridan, *Pizarro*, iv., 2; Rolla. 6. Longfellow, *The Saga of King Olaf*, vii.

CURIOSITIES.

[*We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.*]

LARGEST TRUNK IN THE WORLD.

PORTERS who are accustomed to throwing trunks about like cardboard boxes may not have to be cautioned to handle this baby elephant of a trunk with care, for they will do well if they lift one corner of it. It was built in Fargo, North Dakota, and is eighteen feet long, ten and a half feet high, and ten feet wide. To construct this monster nearly two thousand feet of lumber was used, as well as five hundred bolts, eighty-seven yards of canvas, ninety yards of lining, fifty-four pounds of nails, half a ton of iron, and ten gallons of paint and paste. It is built in sections and can be taken to pieces and stored under cover when not on exhibition. It is made of planks and is canvas-covered, the corners and binding being of heavy iron. The lock is made of wood and bronzed, so that it looks like brass. The handles are made of wood and covered with imitation leather, so that they resemble leather handles very closely. It is wired for electric lights. When this picture was taken the trunk had but one door, which can be seen under the end of the handle next to the workman. Recently the owner had another door put in under the other end of the handle, so as to let the crowd in at one door and out at the other. On the inside were placed a ten-foot showcase and two dray-loads of trunks, bags, and suitcases. As many as fifteen people have been inside this trunk at one time. While it was primarily constructed as an advertisement, it will be utilized as a club-house at one of the popular holiday camp resorts.—Mr. H. E. Zimmerman, Mt. Morris, Ill., U.S.A.



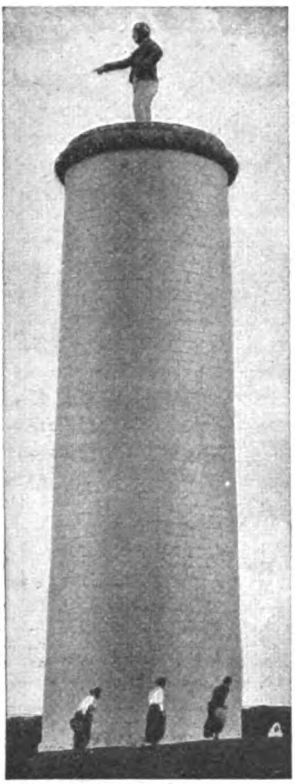


Photo. Poole, Waterford.

HOPPING FOR A HUSBAND.

THE curious figure known as the "Metalman" stands on a white circular pillar about sixty feet in height at the western entrance to the beautiful Bay of Tramore, Co. Waterford. There are two companion pillars, but these have no figures on them. "The Metalman" represents a sailor in the dress worn in the British Navy about the eighteenth century, and stands fourteen feet from his pedestal. How the superstition of young women hopping three times round the pillar in hopes of the reward of being married within the year came into being it would be impossible to say. It is sufficient that many girls are found to go through the performance of hopping for a husband.—Miss C. J. Hamilton, 23, Mecklenburgh Square, W.C.

CAN YOU DO THIS?

PASSING through a small village I saw a window exhibiting the words CHIP, TOES, HERE, as shown in the accompanying sketch. The other side of the window was broken, so one had to guess how the notice had originally read, but this proved to be no difficult matter.—Mrs. D. Q. Joseph, Plasderw, Llangennech, Carmarthenshire.

[As readers may like to puzzle this out for themselves, we will hold over the solution till next month.]

"COOL DRENKES FOR LADYS AND JENTLEMEN."

HERE is a picture of a familiar scene in the island of St. Kitts. It shows a stand for the sale of cool drinks in a village on the beach, not far from Basseterre. The lettering reads: "In God I trust. James McClem. Cool Drenkes for Ladys and Jentlemen Such as Sormi and other things." Sormi is a native bitter drink; the other things offered were soda, ginger, and similar aerated drinks.—Mr. H. A. Ballou, Imperial Department of Agriculture, Barbados.

SOLUTION OF LAST MONTH'S BRIDGE PROBLEM.

TRICK 1.—A leads the ace of spades (killing his partner's king!).

TRICK 2.—A leads the knave of spades; Y must cover with the queen (otherwise the solution is simplified); B trumps.

TRICK 3.—B leads the king of diamonds, which A wins with the ace!

TRICK 4.—A leads the knave of trumps; B discards; Z cannot unguard his king of hearts, and must therefore throw away either the queen of diamonds or the ten of spades. Suppose the former.

TRICK 5.—A leads the ten of diamonds; and according to what Z now throws away, either A will make the eight of spades, or B will make the seven of hearts.

Of course, if, at Trick 4, L throws the spade, A will lead eight of spades at Trick 5, and the result is similar.

A REMINDER!

DO not forget that THE STRAND MAGAZINE *may now be sent* POST FREE *to British soldiers and sailors at home or abroad. All you need do is to hand your copies, without wrapper or address, over the counter at any post-office in the United Kingdom, and they will be sent by the authorities wherever they will be most welcome.*

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The Health Accumulator:
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See Page 22.

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

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he ensations f the Flying Man CLAUDE GRAHAME-WHITE

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OCTOBER, 1916.

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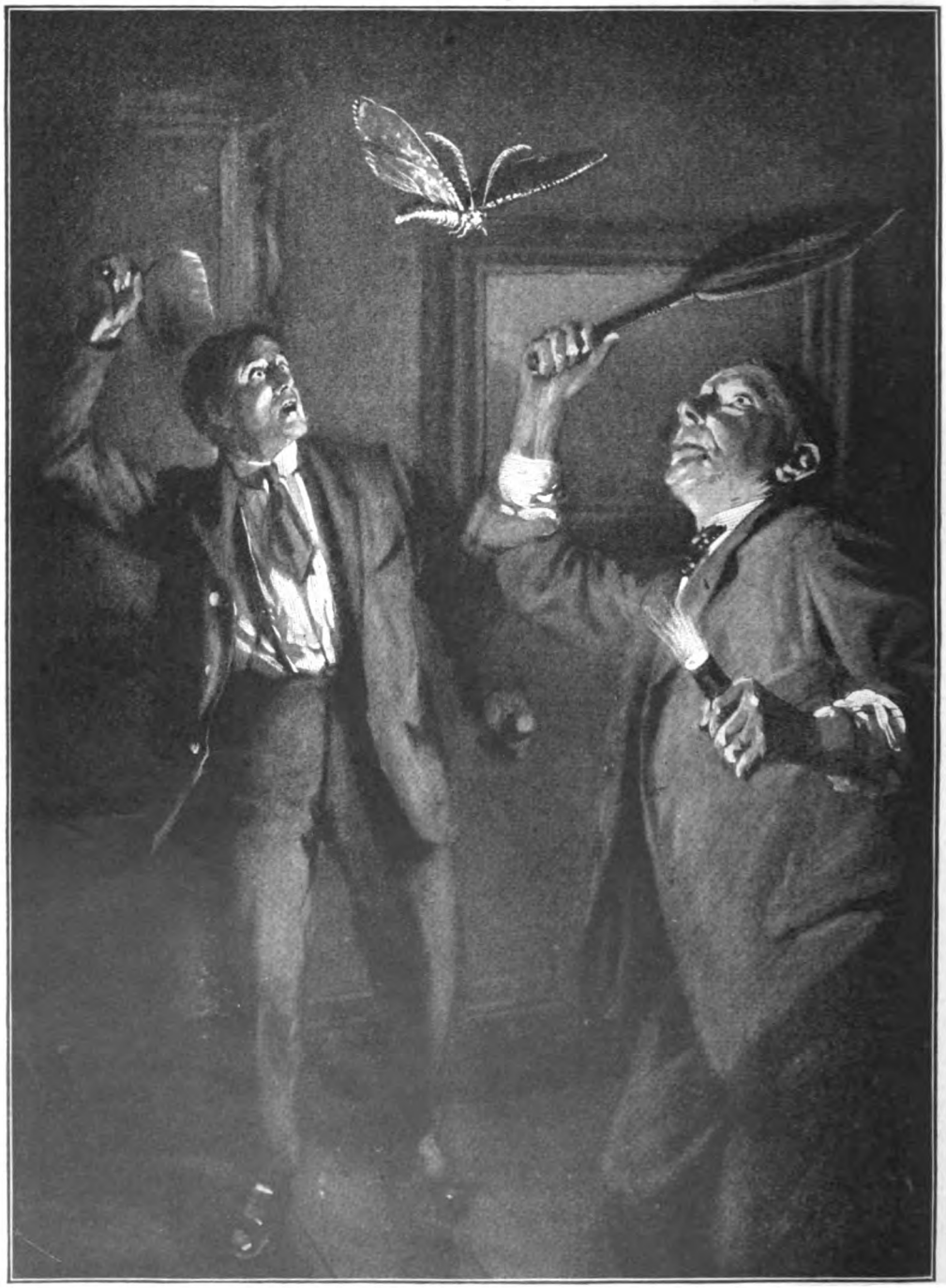
INDEX TO ADVERTISERS, SEE PAGES 2 AND 4.



"'GOT HIM!' HE CROAKED, IN A VOICE AS HOARSE AS THE DRONE OF A CIRCULAR SAW."

(*See page* 374.)

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

Vol. 52. OCTOBER, 1916. No. 310.

The Black Prince.

By FRED. M. WHITE.

Illustrated by A. Gilbert, R.I.

THE car came leisurely down the road, and a pleasant-faced young man stepped on to the wooden platform and accosted the distinguished antiquarian respectfully.

"Dr. Donald McPhail, I think," he said. "I am Raymond Welton. Sir John Denmark asked me to come and meet you."

"Oh, indeed," the famous traveller and antiquarian said. "I haven't seen my old friend, Sir John, for three years; in fact, I don't believe I wrote to him after I went to Mexico. When you are buried out yonder a hundred miles from a town, amongst those Aztec ruins, it is not an easy matter to transmit letters. I hope that nothing serious is the matter?"

"Well, not as far as Sir John and Miss Denmark are concerned," Welton explained. "But it's a ghastly business. Miss Denmark has not been well the last few days, and her maid, Lydia Wrench, has been sleeping in her mistress's dressing-room, so as to be handy in case anything happened. Yesterday morning the maid was found dead in her bed. A doctor from Plymouth who had been called in to make the autopsy was utterly puzzled as to the cause of death. So Sir John asked me to come and meet you, and he hoped that you would not mind putting up at my cottage till the funeral is over. And besides, I shall be honoured if you will come. You see, I am by way of being a novelist, and Miss Denmark and I——"

"Oh, you are Welton, are you?" McPhail asked. "I know your mystery stories quite well. What's the name of that book of yours in which you introduce an Egyptian scarab? Have you got anything of the kind on hand just now?"

"Well, I have," Welton said. "And I was going to ask you to help me, because it is all about those mysterious Aztecs, and there's no living soul who knows more about those strange people than you do. At the British Museum I stumbled on an old manuscript written something after the Munchausen style by a traveller who professed to have been out in Mexico, in the Aztec country. There was some wild legend about a butterfly called the Black Prince. Of course, it is all fiction, but the idea appealed to me so strongly that I am making it the central idea in my new story."

"So you think the manuscript is all romance, do you?" McPhail asked, quietly. "You are quite right, Welton. There is no man alive who knows so much of the Aztecs as I do. I am very sorry to hear about Denmark's trouble, and it is exceedingly good of you to put me up. As an old traveller I am quite used to roughing it."

Raymond Welton's cottage was no more than the owner claimed for it, but it was neat and clean, and the famous traveller's tiny bedroom looked out over the wide Atlantic that broke on the sands six hundred feet below. After a substantial meal McPhail lay back in a big basket-chair, smoking the coarse tobacco that his soul loved, and chatting confidentially with his young host, to whom he had taken a sincere liking.

"Most people would find it rather lonely down here," the professor said. "Not that I quarrel with that. By the way, who lives in that black old house on the brow yonder?"

"That's called Ravenshoe," Welton explained. "It was inhabited by a famous smuggler, whose dark exploits are still talked of by the fishermen. It was a fine place at one time, but only about half the house remains now. The man who lives there is a

nephew of Sir John Denmark, and is, in fact, the only child of Sir John's dead sister. He's a queer and mysterious sort of man, very quiet and reserved, and no one knows much about him, except that he's supposed to be connected with some London finance companies. He bought Ravenshoe two years ago, when his wife left him, and he spends about half his time down here. According to Sir John he is an object of pity. I understand he was passionately attached to his wife, who simply walked out of the house one afternoon and declined to come back. More than that, she refused ever to see him again, or to explain her conduct to anyone. Curiously enough, it was this same Julian Rama——"

"What name did you say?" McPhail asked, suddenly.

"Rama. Queer name, isn't it? Julian Rama's father was a Spaniard from Mexico, and, I understand, claims direct descent from Acamapichtle, who was the second king of the Aztecs. Sir John says that Rama has a number of old Aztec manuscripts proving his claim, but these, I believe, he declines to show to anyone. When he hears who you are perhaps he will change his mind, though I doubt it."

"So do I," McPhail said, dryly. "However, that's neither here nor there. Would you mind, Welton, saying nothing of this, I mean as to who I am, to Mr. Rama for the present? It is just possible he has never heard of me."

"As to that, I can't say," Welton replied; "you'd better ask Sir John. At any rate, all I know is that it was when I heard Mr. Rama's story that I first conceived the idea of writing a novel round a mysterious man descended from the Aztecs, and who knows all the black magic and dark traditions which have been handed down from that mysterious race. To my mind they are quite as fascinating as the ancient Egyptian."

"Good Lord, yes," McPhail burst out, suddenly. "I should say they are. All the wickedness of Tyre and Sidon and Sodom and Gomorrah and Babylon is wrapped up and packed away in the secret history of the Aztecs. The evil spirit called Tlactecolototl, which these people more or less worshipped, had, I firmly believe, at one time a being in flesh. I tell you, I've seen things myself. I have materialized certain essences and incorporate bodies, and have produced from them results which have made me loathe myself. But you mustn't run away with the impression that this Julian Rama knows as much as I do. Unless he has been out there, as I have done, he couldn't. Probably those documents are merely so many letters to him, and I have no doubt that he is proud of his own descent."

McPhail changed the subject abruptly.

"Now tell me, as a matter of curiosity, were there any marks of violence on the body of the unfortunate girl who died so mysteriously?" he asked.

"None whatever. I saw the poor girl as she lay in bed on her right side, and she seemed to have died peacefully in her sleep. There was nothing to be seen, as far as I could judge, beyond two tiny little marks behind the left ear, no bigger than the point of a needle. They were little reddish specks, white at the base, as if a gnat had stung her. You've got two such marks on the back of your own hand at the present moment."

McPhail glanced hurriedly at his hand, and then he smiled a curious twisted smile that showed his teeth.

"You are a curiously observant young man," he said. "And now, shouldn't we walk as far as Porth Place? I should like, at any rate, just to call and see my old friends."

The blinds were drawn in the long windows and the visitors found Sir John Denmark and his daughter pacing up and down the lawn. They welcomed McPhail cordially and insisted upon his coming into the house.

"You'll find us rather subdued at the present moment," the old Anglo-Indian said. "But, of course, Welton has told you all about it?"

"Oh, yes," McPhail explained. "A most mysterious case, from all accounts. I wonder if you'd mind if I had a look at the unfortunate girl who died so mysteriously."

"Well, I—I don't see why you shouldn't," the startled baronet exclaimed. "The poor child is still lying on her bed, and I'll take you up if you like."

McPhail followed bravely into the darkened room and proceeded to pull up the blind. Then he bent over the body and examined the dead features carefully with the aid of a strong glass which he took from his waistcoat pocket. His flint-blue eyes were bent intently on the tiny little specks under the dead girl's ear. But they were tiny specks no longer: they had developed into little red marks, capped with irregular scars, deep red, with a blue ring at the base.

"My God," McPhail whispered. "So that is it! Thank Heaven, I seem to have got here in time."

The door of the little cottage was thrown

wide open so that the light from Welton's reading lamp shone out towards the sea. He had just thrown aside his pen with a gesture of disgust when McPhail came quietly in.

"You have been very patient for the last few days," he said. "And now, my dear Welton, if you have any questions to ask, fire away."

"A hundred," Welton said. "It is five evenings now since I accompanied you into the bedroom of that unfortunate girl, Lydia Wrench. And I saw how deeply you were moved, though I don't think anybody else did. At your suggestion I got Sir John out of the room, and you proceeded to remove one of those tiny sores from the girl's face and put it in your pocket-book. Can you wonder, therefore, that I was curious?"

"Go on," McPhail murmured; "go on."

"Then you asked all sorts of questions. You wanted to know if the dressing-room door was open all night, and whether the door leading into Miss Denmark's bedroom was closed or not. You wanted to know if Miss Denmark's windows were open, and she told you they were. And when Miss Denmark told you that she always pinned her window curtains together in the summer time, because she hated nocturnal moths and insects, and because she had got into the habit of doing that sort of thing in India, you were considerably relieved. Also, you suggested to her that she should keep the doors of her bedroom and dressing-room locked."

"Quite so, Welton," McPhail said. "The death of that poor girl was a mere accident; the pestilence that moved by night was not meant for her at all, but for Daphne Denmark. The mere fact that the girl was sleeping in the dressing-room was unknown to the monster that we have to fight. The danger is close at hand now; it will come as soon as the fading moon is well on the horizon. Therefore the enemy has to move, because he can do nothing unless the weather is hot and fine. I told Sir John that I was going out moth-hunting, and asked him if he would leave one of the windows open so that I could get back into the house. So, as soon as the moon is fairly high, you are going back with me to Porth Place, and we are going to watch and wait for the unseen terror of the night. We shall creep quietly into the house and take our places in the corridor where Sir John keeps his pictures. I have got an electric torch, and I can lend you one too. And make no mistake of the danger. I don't wish to frighten you, but there it is. And that's the sort of thing that tries people's nerve."

"All the same I am quite ready," Welton said, quietly. "I am fighting for the woman I love, and for the woman who loves me. I'd do anything for Daphne."

"I know. Now, if anything happened to Sir John, and especially if anything happened to Daphne, where would the bulk of the Denmark money go to?"

"Why, to Rama, of course. But you don't suggest that a man who is already married, and has a wife living——"

"I suggest nothing. I have been making inquiries; in fact, I've kept the telegraph office at St. Enoc busy during the last few days. You may be surprised to hear that Julian Rama is in desperate need of a thousand pounds."

"Oh, indeed," Welton exclaimed. "Is that why Rama has been in town all the week?"

"My dear fellow, he hasn't been in town at all. He's been here all the time. Like you, he lives all alone, at Ravenshoe, so that he can come and go as he likes, and a man who runs a motor-cycle as he does has only to disguise himself in goggles so that he might pass, even in the village, as a wandering tourist. I am going to show you something to-night that you have never seen before. On the face of it it is nothing but a photograph of a fresco on an old Aztec temple. That fresco I destroyed, but I took this photograph first. Isn't it good?"

The photograph displayed the figure of a woman in Aztec robes lying at full length upon a couch with a hard, white face turned upwards. On one temple something seemed to have perched, something that looked like the petals of a fallen flower, till Welton came to examine it more carefully, and then he saw that it was a gigantic butterfly. There was something weird, and yet so repulsive about it, that Welton shuddered as he gazed at it.

"There is a horrible suggestion about the whole thing," he said. "But it conveys nothing to me."

"It will later on," McPhail said, grimly. "My friend, that's the Black Prince. But come on, we are wasting time here. By the way, have you got any more of that honey that you gave me for tea last night? If so, you might bring a section with you."

Like two burglars they crept into the hall of Sir John's house and up into the gallery. Not a sound did they make, not a sign of their presence did they give, except just once, when McPhail flashed a ray from his

"WELTON SHUDDERED AS HE GAZED AT IT."

electric torch in the direction of one of the bedrooms, after which he proceeded to deposit the section of honeycomb upon the mat outside.

"Sit there," he whispered. "On that oak chest. And take this long-handled Oriental fan in your hand. I have got one too—in fact, I've borrowed them off the wall yonder for the purpose. I'll take my place on the chest on the other side of the corridor, and when the time comes I'll give the signal. Only you're not to make the slightest noise. When I say the word, turn on your electric torch and thrash about in the air with your fan as if your life depended upon it. I may tell you that it probably does. Now, then."

The electric torch was extinguished, and for a time the two men sat there breathing heavily in the violet darkness. And so it went on for an hour or more, till Welton could feel himself tingle in every nerve, until he felt that he must either rise from his seat and walk about or scream aloud.

And then, suddenly, a queer humming sound broke the intense silence. It was as if a gentle steady breeze was blowing against a highly-strung wire, or as if the two were listening to the dying vibrations of a tuning-fork. It was not a great noise, but in the darkness and silence of the place it struck on Welton's ears with a force that set him trembling in every nerve. It seemed to be all round and about, sometimes up in the roof of the gallery, and then again within a foot of Welton's grey, ghastly face. Then to his relief McPhail spoke.

"Now," he said. "For Heaven's sake, now!"

Welton sprang to his feet and thrashed the dark with the long-handled fan till his arm ached and the perspiration rolled down his cheeks. He was dimly conscious that McPhail was doing the same thing, and then suddenly the professor ceased and a long white ray from the electric torch cut into the darkness. Then something seemed to hum and vibrate, something dazzling in purple and red, and a splendour of spangled gold, followed by the dull impact of some flying body as it came suddenly against a downward sweep of McPhail's fan. For the first time McPhail spoke aloud.

"Got him!" he croaked, in a voice as hoarse as the drone of a circular saw. "Got him! He's past all danger now. Come and have a look, Welton; there's nothing to be afraid of."

Down there on the floor was a huddled

mass of some fluffy material, a mangled heap of beauty and colour all blended into one shining and sticky mass.

"The Black Prince," McPhail explained, hoarsely. "The most damnably beautiful thing that ever came out of hell."

"But what is it?" Welton whispered.

"I can't explain here; and, anyway, we haven't finished yet. No, for Heaven's sake, don't touch it. There is nothing more exquisitely beautiful or more deadly poisonous on the face of the earth. And now do you understand what has been worrying me?"

"That devil Rama," Welton exclaimed.

"Of course. Now just wait a minute whilst I get a pair of thick gloves and remove all traces of that hideous mess. Then we'll go as far as Ravenshoe and have this matter out. Unless I am greatly mistaken we shall find the scoundrel at home."

As the two men walked through the moonlight, McPhail proceeded to enlighten his companion.

"It's like this," he explained. "In the ordinary circumstances you would never have got anything out of me about the Black Prince, though, of course, I was interested to hear that you had found that old manuscript at the British Museum. But when you told me all about Rama and the tragedy at Porth Place, then, I must confess, I was disturbed. That's why I asked to have a look at the unfortunate woman. And one glance convinced me that she had fallen a victim to perhaps the most insidious and powerful poison in the world."

"What do you call it?" Welton asked.

"Terafine. It is only found in one insect, and that is the Black Prince. I told Professor Skelton about it a year or two ago, and he made certain investigations on specimens supplied by me, and up to now those investigations are a profound secret. I recognized terafine at once, and the professor confirmed my opinion when he placed that little scab I sent him under the microscope. Then I knew beyond doubt how the girl had died, and I began to make further inquiries into the career of Julian Rama. I found that he was absent frequently in South America on mysterious errands which he said were in connection with a mining concession. And here he doubtless came across the Black Prince. And I found it myself; ah, yes!"

McPhail's voice trailed off for a moment into a hoarse whisper, and the old horror crept into his eyes.

"I don't want to dwell upon that time," he said. "Sometimes I dream of it in the night and wake up wet and cold. But yet I cannot wipe out of my mind the recollection of that evening in the old ruined temple, covered with creepers and orchids, where I first met the Black Prince—met it on the fourth night, under the light of the full moon; when I was watching all alone I saw the infernal thing. I saw a dozen of them, disporting themselves round the remains of a hive of honey which we had taken from a decayed tree. And I fought them, as in the old days they fought the wild beasts at Ephesus. I killed them all, and I buried them whilst my natives slept. I did not want my people to find that the legend was true; but from that day on I never entered an Aztec ruin except in the daylight. And now you know why I asked all those questions, and why I asked Sir John not to identify me with McPhail the antiquary. I didn't want Rama to know who I was, and I don't think he guesses. Come, let us get along, because our night's work is not finished yet."

As they pushed up the slope in the direction of Ravenshoe a fisherman came hurrying along the cliff and pulled up as Welton hailed him by name.

"What's the matter, Tyre?" he asked.

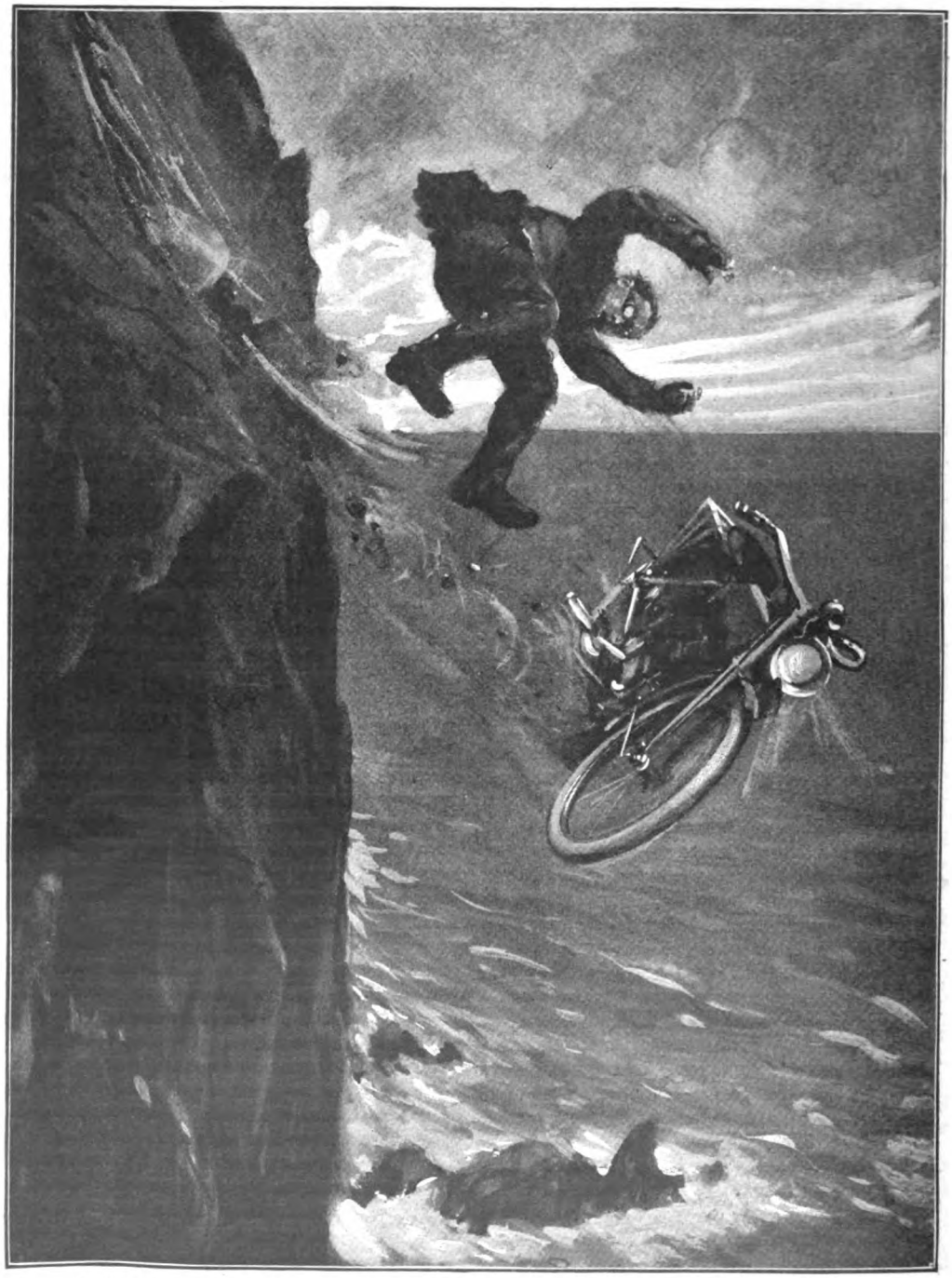
"It's a bad thing that's happened," the fisherman said. "I was going along the cliffs just now, in the direction of Marham, when I see a big car coming up the road with three men in it. One of them was Mr. Pascoe, over to Bodmin, who's Chief of Police there. And from what I could gather the other two were from London, and they had a warrant for Mr. Rama's arrest."

"Then he is a prisoner?" Welton asked.

"Well, no, sir; not in a manner of speaking. Mr. Rama, he must have been looking out for them, for when the car was a quarter of a mile away he comes dashing along on his motor-bicycle down the road and the car pushed on to cut him off. Then Mr. Rama, he swerves round over the headland yonder, so as to make a loop and gain the far side of the Marham Road, which takes him over the slippery grass down the side of the slope, and just then he turns quickly, and over goes the motor-bike and him with the cycle together down the cliff into the sea beyond. I was on my way to tell Sir John."

"Oh, we'll do that," Welton said. "You go down to the beach and see if you can be of any assistance."

As the fisherman vanished McPhail pushed on.



"OVER GOES THE MOTOR-BIKE AND HIM DOWN THE CLIFF INTO THE SEA BEYOND."

"Come along," he said. "We are not likely to be interrupted, and I couldn't sleep to-night till I have been all over that house. I am not fool enough to believe that that monster Rama has exhausted his supply with two of those loathsome insects. They are tropical insects, and could not live for long in a climate like ours, except in torrid

weather, and only then when the moon is in the second quarter. But we have had some very hot nights lately, except for three evenings this week; and this afternoon it was so warm that I knew an attempt would be made to-night. And I was right."

"But if those things are so dangerous to handle?"

"Not to a man who is used to knocking about in motor attire. Mackintoshes and masks and thick gloves not only served Rama as a disguise, but acted as a protection as well. He stole down to Porth Place to-night with one of those infernal moths in a box; he had previously, no doubt, smeared the transom over the bedroom floor with honey, and the big window in the gallery was open. And now, come along and let us wipe out all records."

There was no difficulty whatever in getting into Ravenshoe, for the front door stood wide open, giving on the big hall of the deserted house and the dining-room beyond, where a lighted paraffin lamp stood on the table. In one corner of the room was a safe, the door of which was ajar, and this was crammed with old manuscripts covered with quaint inscriptions that McPhail's experienced eye immediately recognized as Aztec.

"There, what did I tell you?" he said. "Clear that safe out and push all the documents into that sack lying in the corner. Then open the windows and throw it out, and we'll come and recover it in the morning. Upstairs, I think."

They made their way up the wide staircase and searched every room there with the aid of their electric torches. McPhail appeared to be dissatisfied until, presently, he came to a door let into the oak panelling, a door with a catch and button on the outside which he proceeded to open. On the other side of the oak barrier was a network of fine steel in the form of a mesh, and from the room itself gushed a warm odour of hot steam which was mingled queerly with a faint sweet odour that seemed to fill the whole atmosphere.

"Ah!" said McPhail. "Here we are!"

He turned the brilliant lane of light from his torch upon the prison house behind the steel mesh, and almost immediately there arose that peculiar sharp humming musical note that Welton had noticed an hour or so before in the corridor of Porth Place. Then a shadow seemed to fall from the roof, and poised motionless with wings whirring so fast that they hardly seemed to move, and in that instant Welton was gazing with fascinated eyes at the most beautiful thing he had ever seen.

It was a great moth, some ten inches across the wings, velvet black as to the body, with a broad band of royal purple exquisitely patterned like fine lace. Towards the base of the wings the blackness shaded away to a pale blue and the long body glowed beneath a mass of vermilion-coloured hair. On the head was an irregular star-shaped mark that might have been a tiny indented crown of pure gold. The great eyes of the moth trembled and scintillated like opals. It was at once beautiful, and yet sinister and repelling. It hovered there just for a minute or two, then fluttered lightly to the floor with wings outspread as if half-conscious of the admiration that it had created. And yet, alluring and beautiful as it was, Welton shuddered from head to foot as he regarded it.

"There," said McPhail. "So far as I know, only three men have ever gazed upon its like before. It is an exquisite thing, and yet deadly poisonous, as you know. Just one touch of that crimson body, and you would be a dead man within five minutes. It seems a pity to make an end of such a beauty, but it must be done."

"What are you going to do?" Welton asked.

"Burn the infernal place down," McPhail shouted. "Destroy it. Wipe it off the face of the earth. Probably if I turn the steam off, those moths will be all dead by morning; the chrysalids and caterpillars would perish, but I am taking no risks so long as this hot weather lasts. If hell opens and looks you in the face, blot it out. Smother it, and destroy it. Now, come with me down to the garage and we'll find a can of petrol and soak the dining-room with it. Don't you think it's the proper thing to do in the circumstances?"

"I'm with you," Welton said, between his teeth. "The whole thing is incredible; the sort of thing that could only happen in the pages of a book."

"And you're the man to write it," McPhail said, as a little later he tossed a blazing match through the dining-room window on to the petrol-soaked floor. "Here's a plot that nobody will believe, though you'll get every credit for your powers of imagination. And after all, it's a sound saying that truth is stranger than fiction."

The Sensations of the Flying Man.

By CLAUDE GRAHAME-WHITE and HARRY HARPER.

Illustrated by Charles Pears.

I.

FROM time to time in the spread of civilization, the development of commerce, or at the call of sport and adventure men have set themselves tasks which, to the rank and file of men, have seemed like a reckless tempting of Providence—like seeking to do something for which human nerves and brain were equipped imperfectly; which threw on a man what could be nothing less, in the end, than a breaking strain.

Apart from a landsman's awe of the sea, which has survived with reason even to the days of the ocean-going liner, a popular conception of an almost superhuman effort, an effort requiring an intense and unceasing watchfulness and a nerve of iron, has been the driving of an express train. The passenger has pictured that other man forward on the footplate, his hand on a lever which controls the rush at sixty miles an hour of a train weighing hundreds of tons, and his vigilance alone, as he picks out his signals on a stormy night, standing between his passengers and disaster.

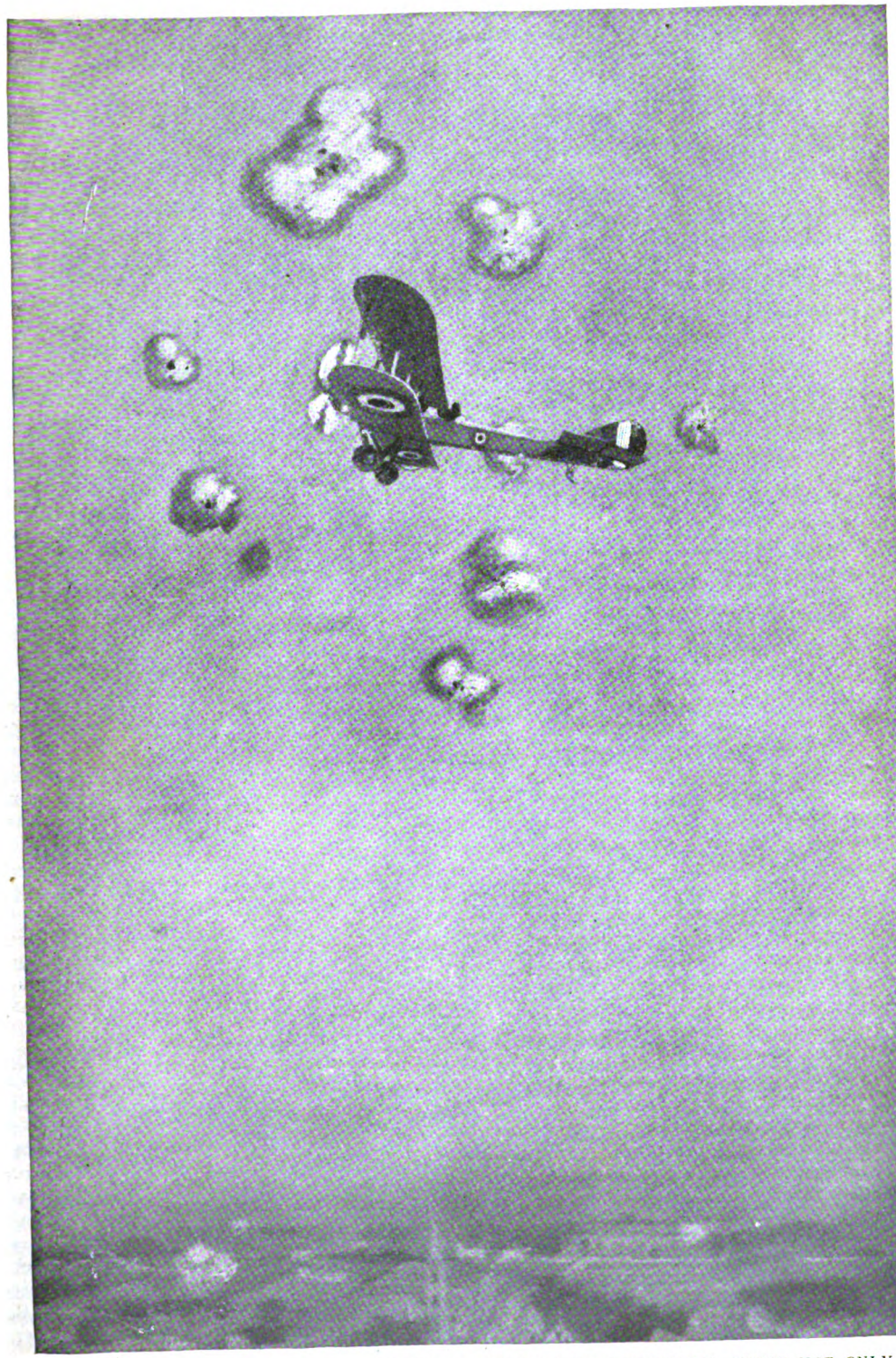
Then, in the perfection of the motor-car, there came the days of great speed races on the road, and the public formed a new mind-picture—that of men who, clinging behind steering-wheels in swaying, roaring cars, rushed along through clouds of dust, juggling with death at every turn, and at a speed which was greater even than that of an express train.

After this came flying, which seemed a final testing of the human nerve. To many people this new quest—appearing in its earliest days to lead to no future progress—seemed nothing less than a mad folly. Not only were there the strains of speed to be reckoned with, but the risk which seemed constant of passing high through the air—placing a man apparently in such a position that, if even a trifling error was made, that error might be fatal. But, once having begun their greatest conquest, men continued obstinately to fly. They taught other men. They began to ascend, undeterred by fatalities, not only in calms but even in winds; learning to drive through treacherous, unseen gusts a plunging craft that was thousands of feet above the earth. And, what seemed perhaps most wonderful of all, human nerves withstood the strain.

To-day, as a test even grimmer and more searching, as an ordeal which it seems could not be exceeded in its sheer, unmitigated strain, there is the work of the airman in war; flying in which the ordinary risks of aviation are magnified out of all proportion by the danger of bursting shells, as fired by enemy guns, or by the attacks of hostile aircraft.

II.

IMAGINE yourself in the position of a British aviator who was flying over the enemy's lines on the Western front. Hostile guns opened fire on his machine, but at first the shells burst behind him and either too high or too low. By degrees, though, and in spite of his erratic steering, the gunners began to get their range. The shells began, so to say, to catch him up, bursting nearer and nearer, and at a more accurate elevation. But when a shell exploded near him, say, on one side or the other, he swung off in a rapid turn, climbing, or diving also. Here, when an airman is under fire, his skill and coolness will reveal themselves. To fly straight on, maintaining the same height and course, would be to render so much easier the task of the gunners below. They would sweep their weapons forward, following the line of the aircraft's flight, until presently the



"A NUMBER OF SHELLS, RUSHING SKYWARD ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY, BURST NOT ONLY RIGHT AND LEFT AND STRAIGHT AHEAD, BUT ALSO ABOVE AND BELOW."

aviator, rushing across the field of fire like a driven bird, would meet in mid-air a well-timed shell and fall to destruction.

The airman with whom we are concerned, though he sought to trick the gunners, realized in a moment or so that he had come nearly to the end of his tether. One gun after another had been concentrated on him, and suddenly a number of shells, rushing skyward almost simultaneously, burst not only right and left and straight ahead, but also above and below. He did not know for an instant what to do—had not the least notion, or any means of guessing, where the next of these messengers of death might burst. To swing to either side might be to court destruction; it might prove fatal also to climb or dive. Here, surely, was a moment to impose an almost breaking strain. But this pilot's nerve did not fail him, nor his presence of mind. Altering his elevation quickly, he made a sudden swerve again—though now he knew he must trust purely to luck, seeing that his machine appeared surrounded by the smoke-clouds of the shells. Thanks largely to the speed of his craft, and despite the fact that shells burst again all round him, he managed to return safely to his starting-point.

III.

AN aviator who passes over the enemy's lines and becomes a target for shell-fire has none of those opportunities for reflection which might come, say, to an imaginative man in an arm-chair, who has leisure to speculate on the horrors of a crash, a rending of wood and fabric, and a fall through thousands of feet of empty air. If the aviator sat inert in his machine, unable to banish from his mind such pictures of terror, there seems little doubt that—unless he were a man with an abnormal power of will—he would push over his rudder-bar and steer back to safety.

But the sense of action which comes to the airman as he ascends, the concentration of his thoughts on the mission that has been entrusted to him, and, above all, the fact that the manipulation of his machine needs his closest attention—these give him a mental attitude quite different from that of the man who, safely on terra-firma, can find nothing perhaps that will divert his mind from the terrors of a flight in war. The pilot must watch constantly his instruments, noting his height, his speed, the revolutions of his engine, and the direction indicated by his compass. He needs to keep an eye on his map, too, and he must maintain also an observation on the land below. And when the enemy's lines are reached there is the task to be accomplished which has sent him on his flight. He may be required to fly over a certain area and look for enemy gun-emplacements, or to direct the fire of his own artillery; or perhaps he will need to penetrate behind the enemy's lines, detecting the movements of reserves and supply columns.

His machine sweeps through the air, alive with the power of its engine, responsive instantly to a touch on its controls; and the man who sits within its hull, shielded from the rush of wind, his ear attuned to the roaring of his motor, has thoughts only for the work that lies to hand. Somewhere in his mind lurks the knowledge that when he is fired at he may be killed, perhaps, or wounded, or his machine rendered uncontrollable; but he does not pursue the thought to its bitter end. He does not, that is to say, if he is well physically and is not over-fatigued, and if his nerve is unimpaired. With the aviator, and particularly with the aviator who flies in war, any morbidness of his thoughts, any feeling that the peril of his task is growing in his mind until it becomes an obsession, must be regarded as the danger sign. It does not for one moment brand him as a coward; it casts no personal reflection at all. It means simply that, owing to the temperamental overstrain, say, of a critically dangerous flight, of a series of more or less serious accidents, or as a result of nerve exhaustion following on a period of war flying, he is no longer fit to pilot an aeroplane. He may, when Nature warns him, have been passing repeatedly through danger zones, and may imagine his nerves are impervious to the shocks they have sustained. Here, though, he cannot know what unconscious registration is at work—what inward strains are being recorded.

IV.

AVIATORS on active service, when brought face to face with an extreme peril in which death threatens suddenly, have found that, though they recognize instantly the nature of the crisis from their point of view as pilots and act promptly, their mind does not, as a matter of fact, take in the whole impression; or it would be more accurate perhaps to say that, having room in their minds at such a moment for only one dominant impression, that impression is concerned exclusively with the manipulation of their machine. Thanks largely to the fact that he has become accustomed to being in the air and in charge of a machine, the aviator is able to act with

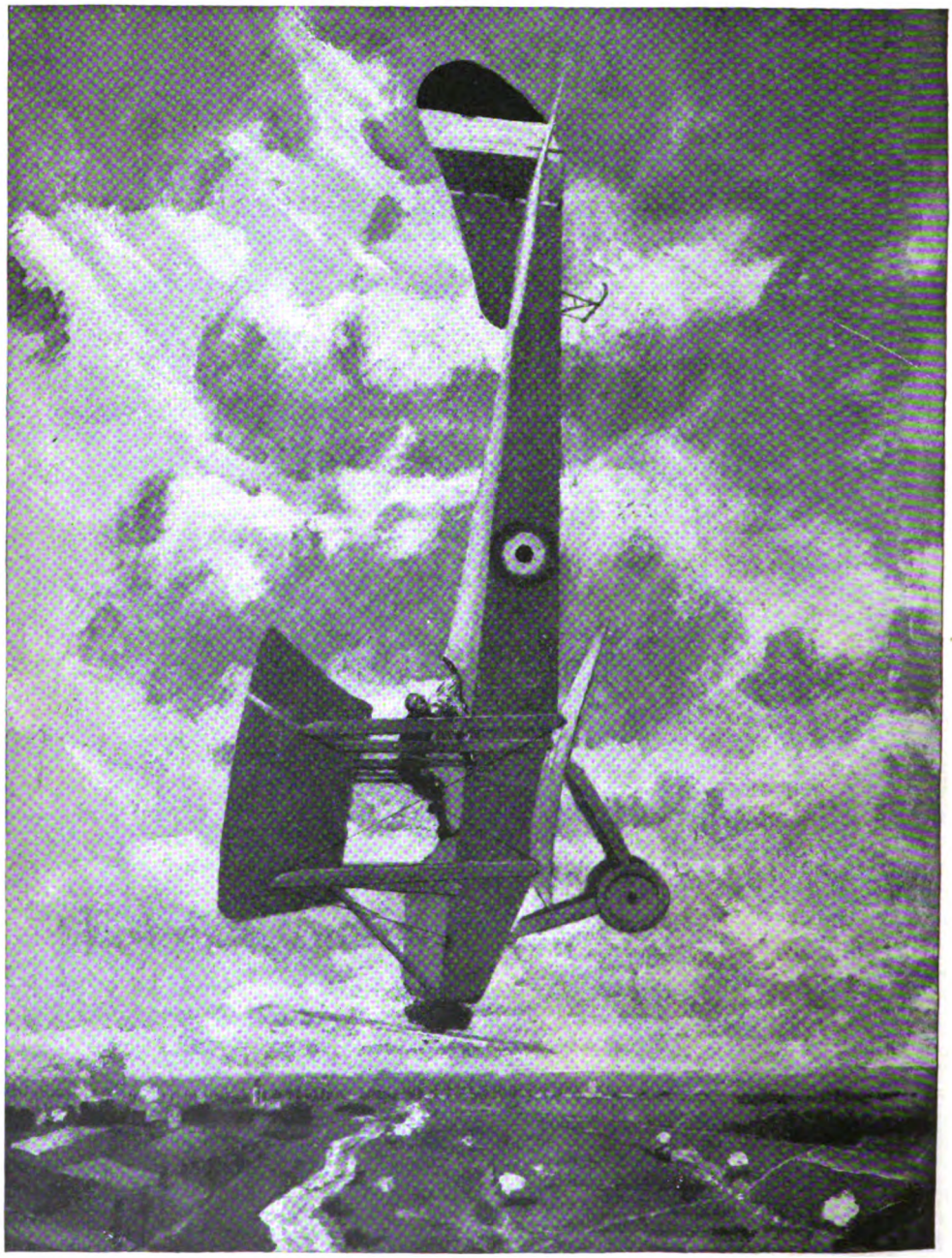
precision in such a crisis as might prove demoralizing to a man who had not been carefully trained. This attitude of mind that the pilot adopts instantly, the bending of all his faculties to the task of handling his machine, saves him from realizing until afterwards, when the first keenness of the impression has gone, the extremity of his own danger. Thus, apart from subconscious action, his nerves are spared.

Some aviators, men who have a capacity for mental concentration, can at a crisis, thanks to this power of controlling their minds, throw out of their thoughts completely any impression that would harm rather than aid. Others have to contend on occasion with what may be described as a natural and a very human shrinking of the flesh, a grim and wide-eyed facing of their peril, which is bred not of fear in its accepted sense, but of the imperfectly-controlled action of a sensitive mind, and which can be conquered and subdued—so long as a man is in health and with his nerve unbroken—by the higher or spiritual courage which, even when he has no illusions, will bear a man unfaltering to his goal.

Very efficacious in sweeping clear the mind of morbid thoughts is that sporting sense of combat, of striving for the individual mastery, which comes to an aviator when he engages a hostile craft. All else is forgotten then. The complete absorption of this desire for conquest was revealed in the case of a British pilot who, ascending in a fast machine and waging a duel with a German aircraft, was disgusted by the fact that the enemy, his motor damaged and certain of his control wires cut, made off in an erratic flight towards his own lines. Our airman, his machine being damaged and threatening to become uncontrollable, could not pursue. There was nothing for him, indeed, save to make his way back to earth; and this he proceeded to do in a towering rage, completely oblivious apparently of the fact that during each moment he was descending in his badly-crippled craft—several of the main spars of which had been shot through—he was in peril of a sudden plunge to death. As he climbed from his machine, no thought of these dangers in his mind, all that he was heard to exclaim, in tones of mingled annoyance and regret, was. "The blighter escaped!"

A British pilot, observing for his artillery, was obliged to fly against a high wind, which reduced his speed in relation to the ground, and made him a better target for the enemy's guns. One shell, after bursting dangerously near him, sent a large fragment through one of the lower main-planes of his machine, making a hole which imperilled the rigidity of the wing, and then passing through the hull within a foot or so of the driving-seat. The question now was this: was the wing so damaged that it must collapse, or was it possible, by skilful piloting, so to "nurse" the machine in a glide back to the British lines that the plane would not break? The pilot, despite the uncertainty as to whether the damaged wing might not buckle at any moment and send the aeroplane crashing to the ground, did swiftly and faultlessly the only thing that might spell safety. He inclined his machine into a cautious glide, performing a series of spirals as he descended, and with the damaged wing on the inner side of the circle, so that it might have the least strain. It may be explained that the inner wings when on a turn, owing to the fact that they are moving less rapidly than the outer ones, are subjected to a smaller air pressure. By not for one instant losing his nerve or power of action, and also by extremely clever piloting, the airman did manage to get the machine safely to earth.

More terrible still was the experience of a British aviator who, ascending as a passenger in a two-seated aeroplane, was making observations from a height of about ten thousand feet. The aircraft came within a zone of hostile gun-fire and was bombarded hotly. Suddenly the passenger, whose seat was in front of that of the pilot, felt the machine swerve and dive and then begin to fall rapidly, spinning as it did so, and with its engine still running. The observer, looking over his shoulder, saw that the pilot, who had been struck in the head by a shell splinter, hung dead in his driving-seat, being held in position only by the grip of his safety belt. The aircraft, completely uncontrolled, was descending now at a great speed. It fell, indeed—its downward speed accelerated by its motor—a distance of several thousand feet in the space of only a few seconds. But, thanks to the height at which the aeroplane had been flying at the moment the pilot was killed, the observer still had time to think and to act before the machine came in contact with the ground. He climbed from his own seat to that of the pilot—the craft not being one that had been fitted with dual control; then, crouching at the controls from which the hands of the dead pilot had fallen, he managed to switch off the engine and bring the machine out of its dive—landing, indeed, safely, albeit in the enemy's lines, with the consequence that he was made



"HE CLIMBED FROM HIS OWN SEAT TO THAT OF THE PILOT."

prisoner. The stress of this ordeal proved more, for the time being, than human nerves could stand. The passenger, though not injured bodily, found that for several days his mental processes were more or less paralyzed, and that he could remember scarcely anything of what had happened prior to this fearful descent. By degrees, however, his mind appeared to become normal.

V.

It has been demonstrated that, granted an airman is well trained and is physically and temperamentally sound, there is hardly a

predicament in the air from which, though the nerve-strain would daze an untrained man, he cannot extricate himself. And this proves again what has been proved before—the extraordinary adaptability of the human brain and nerve. But a point which is insistent is as to the cumulative effect of such strains as are imposed by the flights made in war. The question is asked how long an aviator can fly on active service—how long it is before his nerves break down. Here, though, it is not possible to lay down any hard-and-fast rule. The human factor is too uncertain. But it is clear that youth, with its elasticity, is the chief asset of the pilot when he flies in war. Youth alone can stand the strain. Much depends, also, on the tasks an airman undertakes. There is, in war, a large amount of routine flying to be done—flying which, though there is always a certain risk attached to it, does not entail any extreme peril or strain. Naturally, too, the length of time a man will fly on active service must depend on the personal element of luck; on whether he escapes or sustains an accident or dangerous fall.

The effects of an accident may prove disastrous to a pilot, even though he suffers no bodily injury. The speed of a machine as it falls, followed by the shock of its impact with the ground, inflicts sometimes such injuries on the nerves as are noted by doctors in the case of patients who have been through a railway accident. Confidence is everything in flying. It seems, once this confidence is impaired, as though a man's nerves were attacked directly, as though they had been laid bare. And sometimes it may not take much, at any rate to outward appearance, to rob an aviator of this unquestioning confidence.

One may instance the case of a pilot who made surprising progress as a novice. His handling of a machine, even before he obtained his certificate of proficiency, marked him as a man of unusual promise. His flying was bold, yet skilled; his self-confidence perfect. But one day, making a turn while flying low, he inclined his machine at too steep an angle, with the result that it side-slipped. The pilot, being too low to recover his craft, was helpless. One moment he had been in command of his machine; the next, merely through "banking" a trifle too steeply, he found himself robbed utterly of his power of control, and with nothing he could do but wait for the crash he knew must come. The machine had not, luckily, far enough to fall to render the impact dangerous—at any rate, for him. The wing was broken on which the craft alighted, as was the propeller and other gear; but the aviator, seeing that the worst of the shock was absorbed before it reached him in his driving-seat, escaped with cuts and bruises. This, at least, was all the bodily damage he sustained. But temperamentally, from the point of view of his confidence and nerve, the aviator may be said never to have shaken off the influence of that fall. It served to show him, in a way he could not forget, how fatally easy it is when flying to overstep the unseen danger-line; to make some small error in manipulation, such as might mean nothing were one driving a motor-car, but which may rob of his life the man who is in control of an aeroplane. And this thought dwelt with him. Not that he ceased to fly. He became, indeed, as had been foreshadowed, a pilot of exceptional skill. But he never flew again with the same confidence.

VI.

THE greatest of the world's aviators are men with an unusual imagination—men, temperamentally, who are highly strung. There are, naturally, a number of steady, average flyers; and such men are indispensable. But the men who make aerial history, either in peace or war, live, one may say, on a higher nervous plane. And they pay the penalty for so doing, seeing that this power of imagination is a two-edged sword. It points the way to some achievement, and it points out also, in their grimmest light, the risks that must be encountered. And then the possessor of the imagination is left to fight his battle between the two. Imagination prompts him; imagination whispers also of the dangers. And so it becomes a question of will-power, of sheer temperamental strength. He must follow the heroic promptings of his imagination, and ignore steadily all the perils that it tells him are to be faced. Here, to the man who can take all that is noble from his imagination and keep in check all that is ignoble, one has the great soldier, the great explorer, the great aviator. But they may be exhausted by the inner conflict which lesser men are spared; they may buy achievement at the expense of health and strength. And so one finds often that the great aviator, the supreme artist, passes quickly in a dazzling path across the aerial firmament. One or two great flights, perhaps, and he is done. Neither body, brain, nor nerves can stand the strain.

PUT TO THE PROOF.

By AUSTIN PHILIPS.

I.

"I CONCUR, Mr. Hastings. I will recommend the Comptroller to agree to the Italian Administration's entirely reasonable request. Thank you, Mr. Barton. I am much obliged to you. I need not detain you any more!"

"Thank you, Sir Charles. I am glad that you find my minute satisfactory. Good afternoon!"

The man called Barton—well-dressed, stiffly built, black-moustached, stern of aspect, a principal clerk in the Foreign and Colonial Branch of the Secretarial Department—walked doorwards and went out into the wide, high-ceilinged, stone-slabbed corridor of the great public building; Sir Charles Sherwood, chief permanent head of the Traffic and Revenue Office, took a broad-margined, typewritten document from the outstretched hand of Mr. Hastings, the second secretary, re-read it finally, wrote his strong, bold signature, and handed back the document with a smile.

"A very equitable arrangement," he commented. "I cannot think how our Italian friends did not come to ask for it before. However, *we* must not grumble; the so-called 'reciprocal' arrangement has been all to our advantage for years. That is the last set of papers you have for me, I fancy—unless you wish to speak of anything else?"

There was a pause. The long, lean, aristocratic, clean-shaven face of the second secretary showed a certain disquietude; he hesitated, as one who has to face, with considerable reluctance, a painful and displeasing task. Then he dropped down into a chair beside the great paper-piled desk of his superior—a big, easy, leather, soft-cushioned chair, which more than once had soothed an angry member of Parliament into satisfaction, and where he himself had sat so often to talk over difficult affairs.

"Yes; there *is* something else," he began, slowly. "You will remember, sir, that it is a full month since Prescott retired. It is time that someone was put forward for the vacancy; the matter has been awaiting your return from leave."

"Yes, I gave it much consideration while I was at Mullion. What do you recommend?"

"In the ordinary way I should recommend Barton; he is highly efficient, of course. But, in all the circumstances, I do not feel that he is a safe man for the post."

Sir Charles nodded comprehendingly. The ablest public official of his generation, he had held many appointments both at home and in Greater Britain, and was only waiting a retirement at the Treasury to become its chief permanent secretary, which is the highest office that a Civil Servant may fill. He was a strong man in the best sense of the expression—which is to say that he was bold, unorthodox, never hampered by precedent, and, while incapable of acting weakly, never compassed a cruel thing. He was silent now for several minutes, as he finally made up his mind.

"Hastings," he said, at last, "I regret to say that I agree with you. Zealous, industrious, and highly efficient as Barton is, he is not the man for the appointment. Whoever has it will have to take charge of the Discipline Section, and Barton is too much of a bureaucrat and lacks knowledge of men and women; the punishments which he recommended when he was in that branch some years ago—under old Lorton, who was too weak to check him—appear to have been unwise and cruel. I am—you know it—perpetually dealing with petitions caused by, as it seems to me, his wanton bludgeoning for petty offences of the rank and file. In these days, with the federations and the associations, we should have a hornets' nest about our ears. There is no alternative, then. We shall have to pass over him and bestow the vacant secretaryship elsewhere. Have you anyone particular in view?"

"Yes, sir. Davey is the man I should like to see promoted; it is true that he is eleven places down—but then the others are—well, you know them, of course."

"I do know them. Davey is a first-class fellow—energetic, thorough, efficient, and in all ways after our hearts; his promotion

will cause some heart-burnings, but then that cannot be helped. Tell Beaumont to prepare a minute recommending him. I will take it to the Comptroller within a couple of days."

"Very good, Sir Charles. I will do as you desire."

Mr. Hastings rose and walked doorwards; then, with his fingers on the handle, he suddenly stopped and turned.

"I am afraid Barton will be frightfully shaken," he said, regretfully. "His heart is in the Service; he has always lived for it; the blow will break him up almost, but I suppose it cannot be helped."

"I am afraid not." Sir Charles Sherwood looked up for a moment from the desk to which he had returned again. "I am sorry, but the Department comes first. If Barton takes it badly, I will see what can be done to find him a provincial appointment, or let him take his pension if he cares. Good evening, Hastings. By the way, as the matter has stood so long in abeyance, please have the minute ready for me within a couple of days."

II.

A MAN got out of a first-class carriage at Blackheath Station and climbed the hill to the Heath. He held himself finely; his somewhat stern face was handsome, his lips were pressed firmly together, and he walked with an easy swing. He was that Barton whom Sir Charles Sherwood proposed to pass over for promotion, and this was the manner of his career.

To-day fifty—born with the artistic temperament and denied by his father all opportunity of becoming a painter—he had passed into the Civil Service twenty-seven years ago, had given himself to his duties with the fanaticism which is every true artist's heritage, and, taking on the colour of his environment with the chameleon-like capacity of almost every sensitive nature, had lived for the "Service," done the work of a dozen, become inhuman without knowing it, and, having crushed and broken his own innate love of freedom, life, and beauty, had, during his five years as second-in-command of the Discipline Branch, harshly, sternly, brutally, though never despitefully, entreated his fellow-men. Of late he had worked in the Foreign and Colonial Branch, where no chance of punishing ever came to him; but the result of his hardness remained. There was dissatisfaction in the Service, a great sense of injustice, an ever-seething discontent. Mr. Hastings and Sir Charles were well aware of it. That is why, for the good of the many, they were determined to pass over so excellent a man.

And more excellent than they were aware of. Barton was now utterly different from what he formerly had been. These last two years a vast alteration had come over him; he was indeed profoundly changed. He had married—and married happily; his wife was his ideal mate; the hardness had rapidly gone from him, and the crushed-back humanity had returned. Immensely susceptible to environment, succumbing to the magic influences of love and domestic happiness, he was three parts of the way towards being the man, naturally kind-hearted and human, that he had been when he first entered his wrong calling, twenty-seven years ago.

But this was his personal secret: it was not known at the office, except to his own immediate and marvelling subordinates. The change had come too late to bring him promotion; him, the too zealous dog who had been over-faithful and had gained an evil name. Change, reformation, whatever it might be, would not affect *that* question. Not that he was aware of it. On the contrary, advancement, much wanted and long looked for, seemed certain and splendidly close.

He thought of this constantly, and especially so as he crossed the Heath, which was hazy with the late hot sunshine of a cloudless mid-May day. Sir Charles had been pleased with his treatment of that Italian case. It made surer what had always been sure. In a day or two he would be gazetted an assistant secretary with an immediate increase of salary, to say nothing of power and prestige. He would be able to give his wife that little cottage in the country which they had seen and loved, which was still upon the market, and which, with the caution begotten of long years in safe employment, he had not yet dared to buy.

His wife! Eager to reach the home which in so short a time had come to mean so much to him, he quickened his pace unconsciously, ran up the steps quickly, hung up his hat, set down the brown-leather G.R.-medallioned pouch which he had been carrying, and hurried through the hall. The door at the end of it was open. Iron steps led outside. A garden lay beneath, not extensive but agreeable: a few beds—filled less with conventional flowers than with the wilder kinds such as grow in the country—a green and good-sized lawn. A woman was watering some rose-trees. She saw him, and put down the can.

She was a very charming woman, neither young nor old, with a Burne-Jones face, a slim figure, which seemed slimmer by reason of its perfect proportions, eyes like forget-me-nots, and silken hair with red strands in it which gleamed like ruddy gold. She was the type which appeals to artists in particular, and in general to men of temperament such as Barton secretly was. He had met her at St. Ives when indulging in his solitary hobby, and—looked upon in his suburb as a lifelong bachelor—had married her within three months. She certainly loved him. His strength appealed to her, as her charm and daintiness had aroused the protective instinct in *him*. Her friends had wondered what she could see in this seemingly austere Civil Servant who spent his holiday in painting by the harbour side. She had smiled and said nothing. The lamp of love gives strange illuminations. It showed Marion Harley the hidden heart and real nature of the long-celibate official who had been born for better things.

He greeted her very tenderly, put an arm round her, stooped, kissed her, and began to walk with her up and down the lawn. It was his habit daily, so near together were they, to tell her little tales of the office; departmental secrets never, but small jests and occasional crosses which break a dull routine. She listened and interjected—she knew, now, all his staff by name and description; then she put a question which she knew he would want her to ask.

"And the great matter!" she adventured, with a lightness which concealed a certain anxiety. "You have nothing to tell me about that?"

"No, nothing, except that Sir Charles seems very satisfied and unusually well-disposed towards me, and you know I am senior on the list. Personally, I have now no doubts about it. You will have your cottage very soon."

She laughed, and pressed the arm which was round her, then she led him into the house. "Your birthday present has come," she said. "You must see it before it gets dark."

They went into the drawing-room, which was of excellent proportions, and decorated, at his urging, like her studio-boudoir—one of those famous ex-sail lofts on St. Ives harbour—with blue curtains and brown walls. The pictures were well chosen; some of them presents from her friends in the Cornish colony, others first-class reproductions of famous work. The chairs and sofas were modern and very comfortable; the other pieces were old. She led him to one near the window and stood back for him to approve. He had a genuine love for, and appreciation of, old furniture; and this was a treasure indeed.

"I got it at Stainton's in the village," she said. "It came from a Lewisham sale. I hope you'll like it. It seems genuine enough."

Barton examined it ecstatically—with the ardour of a recent convert to a faith which he has always yearned to follow and discovers late in his days. He looked at the front, the sides, moved it away from the wall that he might see the back properly, stooped over it, went down on his knees and examined the brass handles with pious care. Then he rose to his feet.

"It's splendid, dearest," he said. "Thank you tremendously. I think it's really genuine. But if it isn't—and who can tell?—what does *that* matter, so long as the lines are beautiful and the wood is old?"

He kissed her warmly. They stood looking at it for a little longer, picking out new merits, full of pleasure and praise. Then they parted to dress for dinner. They met again in half an hour's time.

They dined by the light of candles, held by a delightful candelabrum of old Sheffield, talking of a book by a famous Frenchman which she had that day been reading and was anxious for him to read too. The meal passed in that atmosphere of peace and well-being which is sometimes the compensation of childless couples with intellectual interests who have married after the flush of youth is past. They lingered afterwards, she still speaking of this amazing work in four volumes, he leaning back smoking, admiring her dainty appearance, the masterpiece of flesh and blood which, in the eyes of his great affection, she seemed to him, with her fair hair, her white skin, and her low-cut black silk gown. Suddenly the door opened and the parlour-maid came in.

"A lady wishes to see you, sir," she said. "A Miss Holliday."

Barton took the card, glanced at it, raised his eyebrows, and put it down.

"Tell her I will see her in a few minutes," he answered. "Where is she? In the hall? Take her into the study and ask her to wait."

"Yes, sir."

The maid departed. Barton pushed the card across to his wife.

"Heaven knows who she is," he said, smiling. "'Holliday, the Scribblers' Club, Howard Street.' I have never met anyone

"HE GREETED HER VERY TENDERLY, PUT AN ARM ROUND HER, AND KISSED HER."

of that name. It may be on behalf of charity; it may be something to do with the office. I can't possibly say. If you'll excuse me, dear, I'll go and see her and get it over without delay."

He picked up the card again, rose, held the door open for his wife to pass out; then they parted, she going into the drawing-room, he turning into a little room on the left of the front door. It was his study. The grate was fitted with asbestos, and appliances for a gas fire. The paper was subdued, but the atmosphere was not æsthetic; the walls were hung with school photographs and cricket groups of boyhood's days. A large roll-topped desk stood under a window. There were yellow-strapped files of foolscap on the top of it, and in the pigeon-holes were Service envelopes, stationery, and pens. Like all ambitious Civil Servants, Barton did a great deal of work at home.

A woman rose as he entered—a tall woman of about three-and-thirty, well-featured, built largely, with alert and intelligent eyes. He bowed, received a somewhat stiff bow in answer, seated himself at his desk, and motioned to her to resume her chair. He let his eyes rest upon her in silence for a little, allowed his grave features to relax somewhat, and leaned back in his chair.

"Perhaps you will let me know the nature of your business?" he said, courteously. "I am a little pressed for time."

She nodded, paused as if to gather all her energies, and began without delay.

"Mr. Barton," she said, with a certain note of subdued passion, "I have come on behalf of someone whose name is Simes."

Her host stared. The name seemed familiar to him, but he had seen—and dealt with—so many names in his time. The visitor gave him no pause.

"I refer to my brother-in-law," she said. "Twenty years ago, in a minor capacity, he was employed in the General Correspondence Branch of the Secretary's Office of the Traffic and Revenue Office in the Strand. You were in it too. You climbed to promotion on his brains."

"I beg your pardon!"

"Yes, you did. There is no use your denying it; he is an honest man, and does not lie. The great triumph of the Traffic and Revenue Department over the Great Southern Railway was his doing—every word and figure of it—and *you* took the credit that was his."

Miss Holliday paused and sat for a full minute with her eyes fixed upon Barton's stern and impassive face. He sustained her glance. But he did not see her; he was looking into the past instead. For what she said was no falsehood. He *had* taken credit for another man's work twenty years ago, and he owed his first advancement to the fact.

Not that he had deliberately set out to do that other man an injury; the circumstance, the case, the crisis had been born of his own zeal. Overwhelmed with work, he had entrusted a small dispute between the Department and a great railway company to an industrious paper-worm of an underling, and the dispute had grown and grown. The parties had gone to litigation, and the Department's case had been nine-tenths prepared by the underling. The Department had the victory. Barton, who had dealt with one-tenth of the matter, was promoted and transferred to another branch. In the excitement of new work, and the zeal of administration, he had delayed—and then had forgotten—to ask reward for the able, unassuming little paper-worm who, lost in the crowd of minor clerical officials, had subsequently disappeared.

And now his omission, and the little man—how well, at this moment, he remembered him, with his button-like nose, his black moustache, and his spectacles!—were returned to reproach him, as a phantom from the past. The lives of high Government officials often have such ghosts in them. Barton had behaved no worse than many a knighted man. The only difference was that at a critical point of his career his behaviour had been discovered and was in able and hostile hands.

But he was no coward; he showed no signs of fear.

"This is very interesting," he said, quietly. "May I ask why, after this long, this very long, interval, you are taking up cudgels upon your brother-in-law's behalf?"

"I will tell you. He left the Secretary's office some years ago and is now Collector at St. Hilda's in Lancashire, where they make and blow glass. It is one of the unhealthiest towns in England, and he was a fool to go there; he *is* a fool always, except in his work. But he married my sister. She is threatened with consumption. Ventnor, Isle of Wight, is vacant. I want you to send him *there!*"

Barton had started. He both desired to make reparation and to end a situation which disturbed him; her suggestion seemed a happy one. There was not, he knew, so great a difference between Ventnor and St. Hilda's, but the former was always one of the most-sought-after posts. However, he was a

"'I REFER TO MY BROTHER-IN-LAW,' SHE SAID. 'YOU CLIMBED TO PROMOTION ON HIS BRAINS.'"

great friend of Beaumont, who dealt with all promotions, and probably something could be done.

"Miss Holliday," he said, presently, "assuming that I do nothing for your brother-in-law, what do you propose to do?"

"I propose to write to the Comptroller—to demand an inquiry, to have you shown up."

"Precisely. And—you propose to furnish proofs?"

She winced visibly. His calm and steady indifference affected her like a cold douche.

"Madam," he said, "you have no proofs whatsoever; neither can you find any, other than your brother-in-law's word, and—if he is the man I remember—he is the last person on earth to attack an official of my standing without, or with, proof. I refuse to promise anything. I am not a man to be blackmailed. But as an act of grace I will see what I can do on your brother-in-law's behalf."

He held her eyes for a full half-minute. Then, beaten, conscious of her case's weakness, she, no weakling, lowered hers. He rose and accompanied her to the front door. There her manner changed. Her voice shook. There were tears visible in her eyes.

"Mr. Barton," she said, imploringly, "perhaps I was wrong to threaten you—if so, I beg your pardon; but you don't know what I'm going through. Our mother died many years ago. My little sister means everything to me—I brought her up—and I can't see her die like a rat in a trap. Do, do—oh, please do something to get her away from that horrible place!"

She turned and ran down the steps, as if ashamed of her outburst. Barton presently shut the door. Then, very slowly and meditatively, he crossed the hall. As he entered the drawing-room his wife looked up and smiled.

"Well, dear," she said, "and what had the mysterious visitor to say?"

Her husband hesitated. Except for official secrets, such as no man tells anyone, he had the habit of telling her all things, and, in any case, he could hardly have concealed this. Besides, he did not want to conceal it. He desired to unbosom himself, to justify himself, to be told that he was not to blame.

"It was a curious visit," he began. "The woman came to see me concerning a man named Simes. He was once a clerk under me, and did some work for which I got the credit long ago. She wants me to get him promotion. Indeed, she threatened me if I did not."

"And you are going to get him promotion?"

"I am going to try to. Why not? I'll tell you all about it. It was a sin of omission. But I am very sorry it should have occurred."

He told her at length and with detail how, twenty years before, being overwhelmed with what had seemed far more important work, he had handed over the Great Southern Railway dispute to the underling who had dealt with its innumerable details, and how he, Barton, had received credit and promotion in the end. "I deserved promotion," he concluded. "I thoroughly deserved it; I had been doing three men's work for years. But, for this particular case, Simes should have got something, and would have done so had I not been transferred to another branch and lost sight of him from that day. He never bothered to jog my memory. He deserves to be where he is."

"But his wife, John! Didn't her sister say that she was consumptive and must get to a better town?"

"Yes, and I promised to do what I could for her. Beaumont, who deals with promotions, is one of my personal friends."

There was an interval of silence. Barton, standing on the hearthrug, lit a cigarette; puffing at it thoughtfully, with his eyes bent upon the carpet, he looked up to find his wife's eyes fixed on his face. He flung the cigarette into the fender, stamped on it, came to the sofa, sat down beside her, and took her hands.

"I suppose you think I'm an awful beast, Marion!" he said, sadly. "But I was young then, and desperately anxious to get on. I had no intention of being unfair to him. I was wrapped up in myself and just looked straight ahead."

"I know." His wife nodded, and patted his hand gently. "That horrible Civil Service *idée fixe*, with its incessant lust for promotion, made you—what you were. But that poor woman! You must make up for it, and get him Ventnor as he wants."

She changed the subject; nothing more was said about it that evening. Next morning, as was her habit, she walked with him to the edge of the Heath. And, as they parted, she said just these words:—

"See that that poor man gets his promotion, so that his wife doesn't die."

The reminder was scarcely necessary; Barton had slept ill and had pondered many things in the watches of the night. Before eleven he left his own room and walked towards another, likewise on the first floor. He entered without knocking—to knock is not official etiquette—and a man looked up from his desk. Barton did not notice it; but he started perceptibly and pushed a paper on which he was scribbling in pencil rapidly out of sight. He was thin-lipped; his face had a natural bitterness which a

small moustache did not hide. He, too, was a principal clerk; but he was out of the running for an assistant-secretaryship, having been passed over many times. He had, however, a salary of eight hundred pounds per annum, and, under Mr. Hastings, dealt with promotions alone.

"Good morning," he said, with a certain cynical courtesy. "What can I do for you? Won't you sit down?"

"No, thanks. One gets so much sitting. I'll stand."

Barton walked to the mantelpiece and rested his arm on it. The other man rose too. He adopted a similar position. They stood almost side to side.

Barton began without delay.

"I just ran in to see you about the Collectorship at Ventnor," he said. "I want you to give it to a fellow called Simes. Used to be in my branch years ago. No doubt it can be arranged."

A smile, alike bitter and triumphant, passed over the face of Beaumont. He was going to refuse Barton, as he would never have dared to refuse so rising a man before to-day. But he had just been called in by Mr. Hastings and had been instructed to prepare a minute passing over Barton and promoting Davey in his place.

"I'm *so* sorry," he said, hypocritically. "But I am afraid I cannot do as you wish."

"What!"

"No. I have seen Simes's application. He is not senior enough—there are much older men on the list—and Sir Charles Sherwood insists, other things being equal, upon promoting the senior man. But of course, if you care to *see* Sir Charles about it, that is another matter. I shall be delighted to oblige you, assuming he approves."

He ceased, still smiling. Barton, used to being deferred to, did not understand. Yet he saw that Beaumont was adamant, and he was too proud, too wise, too experienced, to insist and ask in vain.

"Thank you," he said. "I am greatly obliged to you."

"But you understand how I'm placed. Sir Charles is a perfect devil about jobbing, and——"

"I understand perfectly. Thank you very much."

And Barton, who did not in the least understand, went back to his own room.

He reached it and sat down at his table, picked up his pen, put it down again, then resumed it, forcing himself to work. But he worked with immense difficulty. He thought of Simes continually, and also of Simes's wife. And of his own wife—how to explain the inexplicable—Beaumont's strange refusal—and tell her how he had failed. The cup was very bitter. Failure meant so much to him; within his limitations he had failed never, like so many men who adventure nothing and advance steadily along a beaten track.

The day passed somehow. He wanted to linger at the office, and he wanted to be at home. He walked through the thronged Strand to Charing Cross Station, hid himself behind an *Evening Standard*, alighted, and crossed the Heath. It was another hot evening, and thunder seemed close at hand.

His wife was in the garden; cool-clad, delicious, she came to greet him; a question was in her eyes. He left it unanswered. They began to stroll up and down. He plucked some Lady's Smock and bluebells—the garden was full of humble country flowers such as would have shocked suburbans—and presently he blurted out the truth.

"I did what I could for Simes," he said. "But I could not get him that post."

"What, they wouldn't oblige you?"

"No. At least, Beaumont wouldn't—and the matter rests in his hands. He said that Simes was the most junior of the candidates, and that the thing could not possibly be done."

"And there is no other way of arranging it?"

"None whatever. Except, of course——"

"Yes?"

"Except going to Sir Charles Sherwood. And that means telling him all. I should have to explain everything—how I jumped up on work that Simes had done. He is a strange man. I never know whether he likes me; sometimes I doubt if he does. It is more than possible that, if he does not want to promote me, he might make this the excuse."

She nodded, let him take her arm again, and in silence they walked up and down. Suddenly she released herself and turned away.

"I'm going to dress, John," she said. "I'm going to dress."

She hurried indoors, as if to be alone with herself. Barton began to pace the garden, wretched and perturbed. He loved her. All true love has jealousies; he wondered whether, now that she knew him slighted and rebuffed by Beaumont, she was going to love him less. Women were such strange creatures. Was it that the revelation of

this incident in his past career would take her love away?

He, too, went in to dress for dinner. They met, presently, for an almost silent meal. What talk there was was based on books and pictures and other bloodless things. Barton felt that his old—his young—ambition rose more and more between them like a cruel and dividing ghost. For he knew that she, like many women of her intelligence, rightly, or it might be wrongly, did not view things with a man of the world's eyes. Possibly she was foolish; perhaps she was a little nearer the angels than he was: possibly she was closer to truth.

Presently she addressed him, as he smoked in silence, on the matter next their hearts.

"John," she said, "I want to talk to you. It is close here, this evening. Let us go out on the Heath, shall we, for a little while?"

He nodded, and waited for her with greater happiness, for there had been vials of tenderness in her voice. She descended presently, a black shawl edged with sequins about her white shoulders, a shawl of silk, Spanish and precious, yet not more beautiful than the wonder of her silken hair. They went out of the front door and into the roadway, turned to the right, and in a few minutes were close upon the rim of the Heath.

It was nine o'clock. The sun had long since fallen. The thunder-clouds had disappeared now. Low down in the east hung a great round light shaped like a Chinese lantern, an immense and honey-coloured moon. Close at hand gleamed the lights of an omnibus, scolding its way villagewards; a dull roar sounded without cessation—the mixed and multitudinous noises of the vast mother city, murmurous for mile on mile.

They took a path which bisected an abandoned quarry, and stepped on to the grass. A seat faced them. Mrs. Barton disengaged her arm from her husband's and sat down. He imitated her. They remained silent for some time.

"John," she began at last, "what are you going to do?"

He looked at her. He could see her face—the colour of her eyes even, so light was it, so rapidly the full moon rose.

"What *can* I do?" he asked. "I have 'done my possible.' I cannot see Sir Charles."

"Why not?"

"I told you it might destroy me—ruin my chance of promotion—he might pass me over for another man."

"What then?"

"Oh, it is unthinkable. *You* would think less of me. I should have failed. I couldn't stay in London. I should have to ask for a provincial billet, or take my pension——"

"I shouldn't think less of you. I should not think you had failed. By risking all to save a life, by doing a mere act of honesty, John, you would have succeeded in my sight. I wish you *were* pensioned."

"What!"

"Yes. I've never told you so, but I hate this nightmare of promotion; it's inhuman. I love you to work and be the best man at the office, but the incessant idea of 'success' puts a barrier between us; it is vulgar, degrading, worse. I long sometimes for you to retire."

"But we should have to leave here. You would not have your cottage."

"Yes, I should. I should have it instead of a suburban house. But I know *you* would rather stay here and go on with your life's job, and I'm happy enough that you should do so, if only you can do it and be just. But to do it and let an old injustice continue is unforgivable. It is not even as if we were poor. That woman's death would be on our consciences. We should deserve—oh, terrible things!"

She ceased. Her husband remained motionless; silence fell upon them, a long and intense silence in which more than ever was audible that miles-wide roar of millions of other men and women caught like these two in the nets of Circumstance and bludgeoned by the rods of Fate. And Barton spoke presently, taking his wife's cool hand.

"My dear," he began, "since I have known you, I have been conscious of a change perpetually going on within me. I have gained what I believe is sympathy; maybe I have weakened, maybe I am more like the child I was born, and whom school and the world made hard. Whichever it is doesn't matter. I just look at things differently, that is all. I will see Sir Charles about Simes to-morrow. No; don't thank me, Marion. It isn't only because I love you; it's because I want to—and must!"

The man who, outside his immediate circle of subordinates, was held hard, austere, and cruel took his wife in his arms and kissed her in broad moonlight, as any man of the people might take and embrace the woman of his untaught heart. The honey moon rose steadily. Dew fell; the grass glistened and grew wet. In the north and north-west the sky was a light blue almost; the trees of the park showed dark and yet distinct. The

"EACH OF THEM STARTED A LITTLE, AND MR. HASTINGS WITHDREW INSTINCTIVELY THE DOCUMENT WHICH HE HAD BEEN PUTTING INTO SIR CHARLES'S HANDS."

slopes of Shooter's Hill gleamed infinitely brighter, wearing a girdle of mist. Husband and wife got up presently and walked slowly back to their home.

In the morning Barton did not go to Blackheath Station; he chose the longer walk to Lewisham instead, that he might think out what he was going to say. And at noon precisely he entered the Secretary's room.

Sir Charles was there, with Mr. Hastings,

who at that moment was handing him something to sign. Each of them started a little, and Mr. Hastings withdrew instinctively the document which he had been putting into Sir Charles's hands.

Barton saw that he intruded. But men about to commit suicide do not stand upon ceremony, and he advanced towards the desk.

"I should like to speak to you, sir," he said. "It is somewhat important—and I wish to say it now."

Sir Charles raised his eyebrows, nodded, then pointed to a chair beside the desk and facing his own. Barton took it and began :—

"You are perhaps aware, sir, that some twenty years ago—it is on my records and is well known to Mr. Hastings—I received the Comptroller's personal commendation for work done in connection with a dispute between us and the Great Southern Railway. I ought not to have received it. Nor ought I, for that particular piece of labour, to have received the promotion which was given me at the time. I dealt with the case but little. I was occupied with other work. It was done by a Second Division clerk named Simes!"

Mr. Hastings stared as if he heard a madman; even if it were ten times true, he saw no object in mentioning the matter at this, or indeed any, hour. Sir Charles, on the other hand, with his vast knowledge of men, looked interested, as though he wished to hear more. Barton did not keep him waiting long.

"I am aware that I behaved badly," he continued. "I was in a position to see that Simes—a good and unassuming little fellow—received reward as well. But I ignored him. I make no apology. I only desire to make redress."

He paused again. Mr. Hastings's amazement left him breathless. Sir Charles Sherwood's interest found the form of words.

"Yes, Mr. Barton," he said, inscrutably. "And what do you propose we should do?"

"I have come to ask that he—Simes—be given the Collectorship at Ventnor. He is now at St. Hilda's, Lancashire, where the death-rate is abnormally high. His wife is threatened with consumption. Her sister came to tell me so the day before yesterday. That is why I am here."

There was a long pause. Barton's gaze met Sir Charles Sherwood's steadily; the eyes of neither man fell. Then the Chief Secretary walked to the mantelpiece and leaned against it with a curious and reflective smile. Barton sat in the chair quite motionless. Mr. Hastings looked alternately at them both.

"Hastings," said Sir Charles at last, "Mr. Barton's conf—er—statement is—what shall I say?—a little belated, but it is no doubt accurate, and we had better do Simes what seems only justice at once. Tell Beaumont of my wishes, and let him draft a minute to that effect."

Mr. Hastings bowed. Sir Charles looked at the man in the chair.

"Thank you," he said. "I am much obliged to you. I will not detain you any more."

Barton rose. Again his eyes met those of Sir Charles Sherwood; in them was something which the Chief Secretary read. It was neither appeal nor defiance. It was just a calm acceptance of expected fate.

The door closed upon him. Mr. Hastings was the first to speak.

"What an amazing thing!" he said. "I suppose Simes, through his sister-in-law, put pressure upon Barton and asked him to get him Ventnor, and threatened him unless he did—though he couldn't have proved anything, and would only have damaged himself by complaining without evidence after all these years. However, it is Nemesis, anyway. It is just as well, perhaps, that you decided that Barton should not have the vacant post."

Sir Charles half smiled. Then he took several turns up and down. He seemed exceedingly thoughtful. Possibly — who knows?—he was engaged in carefully examining his own official past. Suddenly he pulled up short opposite to the second secretary and extended his hand.

"That minute I signed just now, promoting Davey and passing Barton over," he said. "Let me have it again."

Mr. Hastings handed over the foolscap. Sir Charles glanced at it, waited a moment, then tore it into little bits. The second secretary gasped audibly. His chief half smiled once more.

"Davey is young and can wait," he said. "As for Barton, I have changed my point of view. Men mellow as they grow older. Barton has mellowed. I have noticed an alteration for some time past, but did not realize its extent. Anyone who, when he knows his promotion is hanging in the balance, can risk breaking himself for an offence of twenty years ago is indeed a very strong man. And strong men, Hastings, are what we need in high places. They do not do cruel things!"

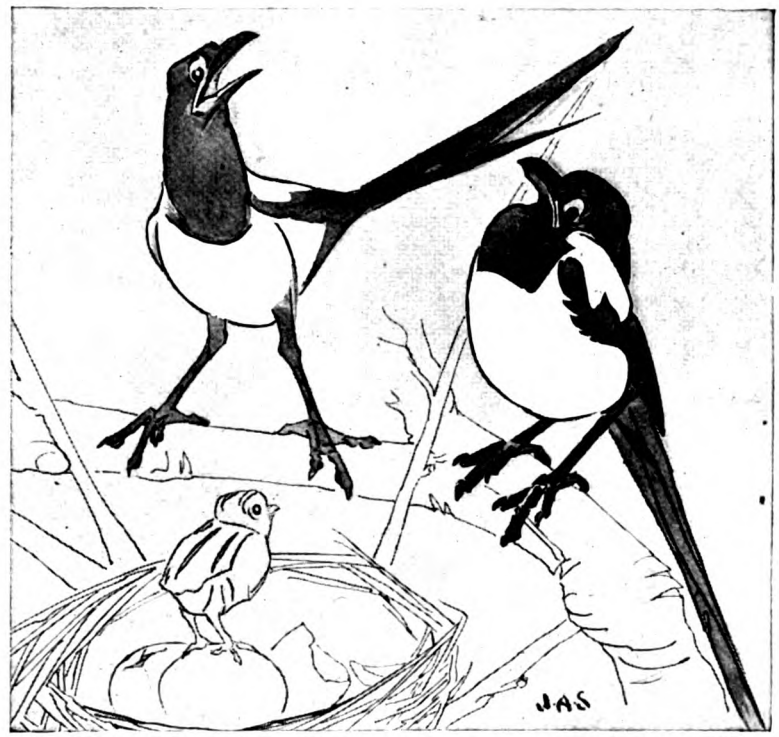
Bird and Animal Superstitions

By
E. D. CUMING.

Illustrated by
J. A. SHEPHERD.

STRANGE beliefs concerning beast and bird may generally be traced to some peculiarity of habit, voice, or colour; sometimes to legend; but superstition and legend are so entangled one with another that it is not easy to say which gave rise to the other.

Take the case of the magpie. Tradition says that Noah declined to have him in the Ark, and to chagrin at the patriarch's displeasure are due all his faults of character. Certain it is that among our ancestors he was known as "the devil's bird" and regarded with respectful awe. This sinister reputation did not militate against his well-being; on the contrary, in the days of cock-fighting it won for him, or his wife, a place unique in avine society. Cock-fighters held that the eggs of gamefowl which were hatched out in a magpie's nest produced chicks of exceptional courage and spirit. Magpie-hatched cocks were considered invincible in the pit, hence a magpie's nest within convenient reach was an object of desire; and as "cocking" was the pastime of the million the bird who now stands first on the gamekeeper's list of

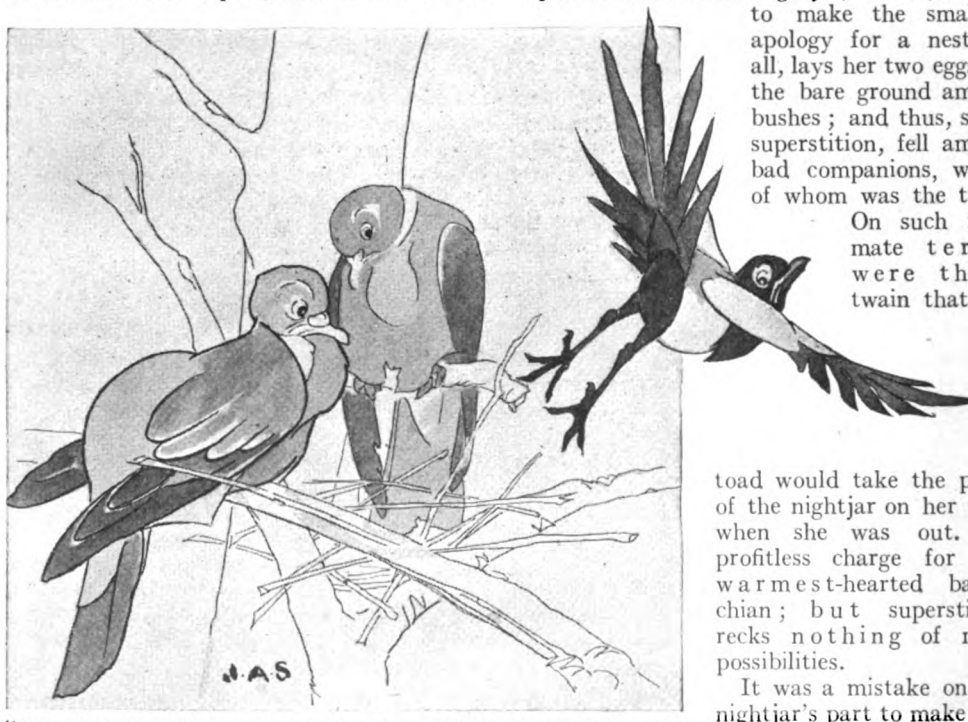


"THE HEN MAGPIE WAS NOT REQUIRED TO REAR THE CHICKS."

winged vermin was the cherished *protégé* of all men.

The hen magpie was not required to rear the chicks, you understand; before she could recover from her amazement at the precocious activity of the brood she had produced they were taken, with all their imaginary perfections on their heads, and made over to their natural parent.

The legend that when the world was young the magpie was appointed professor of architecture to all birds has given rise to various tales and superstitions. It crosses one's mind that the magpie of an earlier day built a better nest than his descendant, but let that pass; suffice it that he taught other birds the art, and his pupils varied in capacity and intelligence. Some did so well that they outstripped their teacher; the wren, for example, who learned to make a complete nest domed over, with the door at the side. Others were less expert, and these were the majority; we have examples in those birds which build cup-shaped nests, like the blackbird, thrush, and chaffinch. Others, again, were idle and careless. Of these the wood-pigeon is a notorious case; he would never even try to master the first principles of architecture. The magpie strove to teach him that if he would make a decent job he must take one stick at a time and weave it into the structure before taking the next; and the wood-pigeon, impatient, kept urging his master to "Take *two!* Take *two!*" When no more than the bare foundations had been laid, and that badly, the wood-pigeon, tired of the business, protested, "That'll *do!* That'll *do!*" until the magpie, disgusted, flew away, refusing to have any more to do with him. Wherefore the wretched pretext for a nest with which the wood-pigeon must be content unto this day; and for his misdoing he may speak only those words which so irritated the magpie. There were worse pupils than the wood-pigeon, though; birds who couldn't even learn to lay two sticks in such wise that they were safe on a bough. The magpie dismissed these as hopeless, and they have had to nest on the ground ever since. The disgrace seems to have preyed upon the mind of the nightjar, for she, unable to make the smallest apology for a nest at all, lays her two eggs on the bare ground among bushes; and thus, saith superstition, fell among bad companions, worst of whom was the toad. On such intimate terms were these twain that the toad would take the place of the nightjar on her eggs when she was out. A profitless charge for the warmest-hearted batrachian; but superstition recks nothing of mere possibilities.



"THE MAGPIE, DISGUSTED, FLEW AWAY, REFUSING TO HAVE ANY MORE TO DO WITH HIM."

It was a mistake on the nightjar's part to make this arrangement, for the toad, of all creatures, is the one which self-respecting birds should avoid. The chosen tool of witches, his form the one oft-times assumed by warlock on evil deed intent, the toad has not yet quite lived down his former disrepute. The bird who cultivated friendly relations with him was bound to be eyed askance, and the

nightjar, by reason, some hold, of his uneasy conscience, shuns the broad light of day to fly softly in the gloaming. His popular name, "goat-sucker," betrays the offence still laid to his charge by those who respect the tales of their grandfathers; though how the bird would set about milking goat or cow is a thing beyond explanation.

The bird that flies or calls by night has always been held in suspicion. The sole exception to the rule is the barndoor cock, about whom reigns a peculiar sanctity. When evil spirit, ghost and goblin, swarmed abroad in the night-time the cock brought comfort to trembling man. His crow marked an epoch in the twenty-four hours; for when he upraised his voice he proclaimed end of the reign of the Powers of Darkness, and made earth safe until next set of sun. Cock-crow—the first cock-crow after midnight—was the signal for all things evil to retire to their own places; a signal none might disobey. This comfortable discovery was made in the fourth century; it is not wholly discredited in the twentieth. Mystery enveloped the cock; his power to see ghosts, goblins, and the like was proof of his supernature, but that gift was one he had in common with the horse and dog. Still stronger evidence appears in his conduct at certain seasons. When man knew that he warred against the powers of evil it must have been a fearsome thing to see him descend from his perch and do battle with a Something believers in the spirit-world could not see; awful to watch him fight with beak and spurs against Nothing, even as he would fight in the cock-pit. And with what relief would the awed beholder see him, the invisible foe vanquished, flutter dustily up to the perch again, to flap his wings and crow the crow of legitimate triumph. He always won.

"THE TOAD WOULD TAKE THE PLACE OF THE NIGHTJAR ON HER EGGS WHEN SHE WAS OUT."

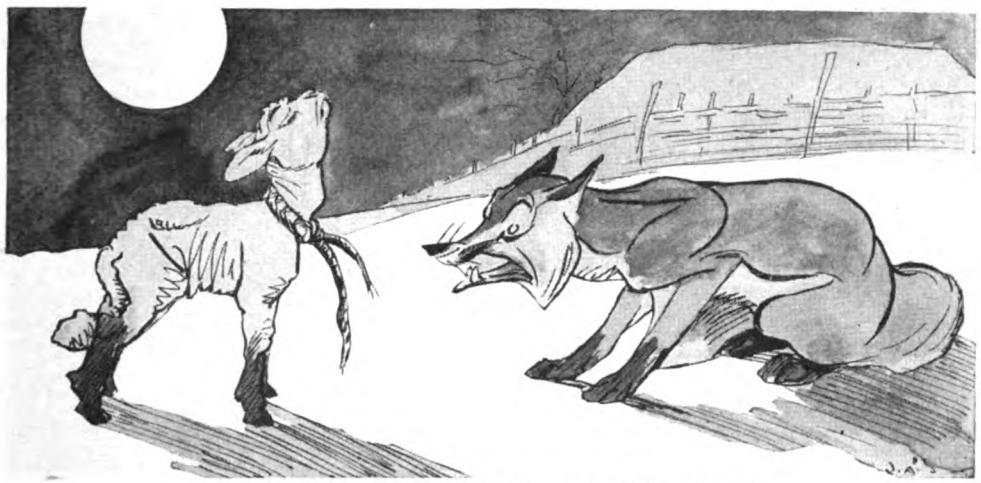
The toad, by reason of his nocturnal habit and unprepossessing person, was anathema to our forbears, yet enjoyed a certain esteem. But for Shakespeare most people would ere now have forgotten that he wore a precious jewel in his head—or somewhere in his anatomy; that jewel, the toadstone or crapaudina, was so highly prized by the sages of an elder day that they have left quite a respectable body of literature on the subject. Not every toad harboured the treasure in his inside. Dr. Bell, an authority on this recondite matter, writing in 1569, says the crapaudina occurs only in the heads of "olde and greate todes, usuallie in the head of the hee tode." There were two approved methods of extracting it; if you were in a hurry—and who would not be for such a prize?—the plan was to catch a toad, set him on a table covered with a red cloth, and sit up all night with him. The toad would, presumably, get tired of the business and, if he had a crapaudina in him, surrender it before dawn. Then the patient watcher was rewarded; he possessed a certain antidote to all "poysons" and a talisman from which infinite profit might be confidently hoped. It is a little difficult to reconcile this method of securing the treasure

with the accepted test of genuineness; being so valuable there were spurious specimens on the market, and when offered a crapaudina the first thing to do was to make sure it was the real thing. To do this you caught a toad and held the stone before him, when, "If it bee a ryghte and true stone the tode will leape towarde it and make as tho' he would snatche it; he envieth soe muche that man shoulde have that stone." Toadstones are still to be found. Science, the merciless, declares them to be the fossil teeth of fish.

Special interest attaches to superstitions which can be traced to the habits of an animal. Few beasts were more intimately connected with witches and witchcraft than the hare, and it needs little acquaintance with the habits of the hare to understand how she acquired her reputation as uncanny. When hard pressed by hounds she displays curious predilection for any open door; pushed to extremity she will seek refuge in cottage or outhouse and hide under any lumber or furniture that offers concealment—pathetic evidence of misplaced confidence in the protection of man—there to lie till danger be past. It was this habit, we may scarcely doubt, that gave rise to the belief that witches at their pleasure could assume the form of the hare. We can imagine the mediæval sportsman at the door of some cottage, whose only visible occupant was a decrepit old woman; his hounds had run their hare to the open door, and there the quarry had vanished. The old woman denied knowledge of the hare; she would be flustered by the sudden advent of horsemen and hounds and gave the impression that she had been hurrying. To the mediæval mind the inference was clear. The hounds had been hunting no true hare but that which, as the Irish phrase has it, was "no right thing"—to wit, a witch in hare's shape who had resumed her proper form as soon as she reached the safety of her own dwelling. It would never occur to that sportsman to look under the faggots in the corner or under the bed, when he would have discovered his hare panting and black with sweat; he would hastily cross himself and escape as quickly as might be from the vicinity of one whose powers should be gauged by her ability to adopt at will the likeness of a hare. Witches appear to have taken upon them the shape of the hare as a mere matter of temporary convenience; where a modern old lady would call a taxi she of the Middle Ages turned herself into a hare, and in that very suitable shape made her journey. It is true the witch sometimes assumed hare-shape for wrongful ends. In Ireland cattle-owners used to kill, or try to kill, any hare they chanced to see among the cows on May-Day; that was the day witches selected to contract with the cows to supply them with milk for the year. In Scotland they did the thing more openly. If you saw a hare sitting up and milking a cow you might be sure it was no hare that did this thing but a witch. Witch-hares were very hard to kill; the thing *might* be done with a charge of silver shot, but as such shot were commonly cut from a coin they would not fly straight, and the hare could afford to smile at them, however able the marksman.

It is a little curious that there should be a wealth of superstition concerning the hare

"THE HARE COULD AFFORD TO SMILE, HOWEVER ABLE THE MARKSMAN."



"A WARNING OF THE FATE IN STORE FOR THE FOX."

and practically none at all about the fox, whose intelligence prompts him to actions quite as redolent of the supernatural.

We may detect the sense that breeds superstition in the proceedings of the women in Mayo. With the object of conciliating him who would steal poultry, they hang shreds of wool on the bushes at the season when vixens bring forth their young, that the mother may have the wherewithal to make a comfortable bed for her family. It is a kindly thought, and the fact that vixens want no bed, laying up their cubs on the naked soil of the breeding earth, need not qualify our appreciation. A past generation went further. Half a century ago the women used to knit woollen mittens of a size suitable for foxes and hang them on the bushes at the approach of winter. It was felt that such a delicate attention could not but appeal to the finer vulpine feelings and secure the safety of fowls. At the same time, bethinking them that among foxes, as among more exalted beings, there are individuals without finer feelings to reach, the Mayo folk used to tie a bit of stout cord round the necks of their lambs; this for a warning of the fate in store for the fox whose heart might not be softened by the tender of mittens.

From fox to goose is a short step, and here again we come in contact with witches. The fact that wild-geese fly by night no doubt accounts for the circumstance that witches, whose taste for nocturnal aviation is well known, rode geese as an alternative to the orthodox broomstick. The manners of modern domestic geese betray this former servitude. When you see them stretch their necks, gazing skyward, what time they waddle with flapping wings, they are expecting witches to mount and ride as they used to in the long ago. Thus my nurse, when I was at the age of faith; she said her mother kept geese and she ought to know. Witches used to turn their power over geese to strange uses. There was the Lancashire witch—the witches of that county were famous—who lived alone and shunned in a wretched hut between Kirkham and Singleton. Her neighbours knew she milked their cows, but could never catch her in any shape doing it. Upon a day a man met the witch driving a goose along a narrow track, and because the bird did not get out of his way he struck it with his stick—an ash twig, therefore pregnant with virtue. And, he said, at the touch of the stick the goose vanished, leaving on the path a broken pot, whence milk flowed about his feet. In such wise did that witch convey home, unsuspected, the milk she stole. Which thing is no mystery at all; the talent which now works itself off in novels at four and sixpence net in a younger and less literate age found vent in fiction of other sort. Credulity is the father of invention, the romance faculty was ever with us, and the sensational ever appealed.

The connection between geese and those fearsome beings known to our forbears as Death-hounds, Gabriel-hounds, Wish-hounds, and half-a-dozen other names is not at first sight obvious. It was hid from those past generations who held death-hounds in such dread. Blood-curdling are the tales of these spectres. Packs of death-hounds swept through the night-skies with terrible hound-like cry. The solitary wayfarer on the moors would hear, far up in the darkness, the

clamour of their passing in chase of what quarry none might say. Sometimes their rush was so near above his head that the wayfarer believed that he himself must be their prey; when he, of a courage to look, would see black, unearthly shapes with eyes of fire and teeth dripping blood; when he would remember that these were the souls of children who had died unbaptized, and feel his hair rise on end.

"IF, AFTER WASHING HER FACE, A CAT FIX YOU WITH AN EYE, BEWARE!"

So firm, so universal was the belief in death-hounds that sceptics who refused credence were fain to admit the existence of some basis for the superstition; and eventually William Yarrell, the famous naturalist, suggested an explanation which proved the true one. In a word, death-hounds consisted of wild-geese and imagination. Wild-geese changing pastures fly by night in "gaggles" or packs; and, flying, call with a ringing cry strangely reminiscent of beagles on the scent of a hare. Thus for centuries they had made night-journeying a terror for mankind.

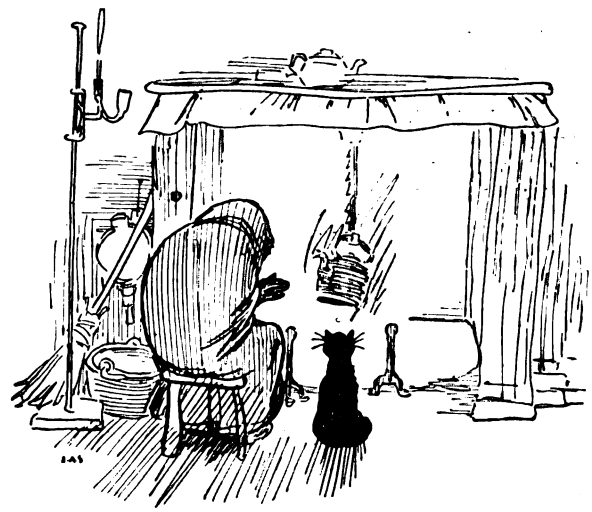
A curious thing about dog-lore is the overshadowing gloom. Canine tradition breathes an atmosphere of fear, suspicion, and hatred; a dog of our time accustomed to regard himself as "the faithful friend of man" would sit down and howl with mortification could he read all that our ancestors attributed to his own. Man's former attitude towards the species is epitomized in the belief that the devil used to assume by preference the form of a big black dog. Survey of the industrial life of England in an elder day suggests the reason. When sheep-rearing held the foremost place in our agricultural economy the great enemy of the farmer was the vagrant dog who roamed the country, a very terror to the sheep-master for his depredations among the flocks. It was the masterless dog, I am persuaded, who gave birth to that dread apparition, the barguest, padfoot, guytrash, or galleytrot; which ghostly, canine thing was big and black and infinitely wicked. The characteristics of the barguest were suspiciously like those of the vagrom sheep-worrier; he was cunning, he slunk away at the approach of man, and in the night-time he slew sheep by the score, leaving never a mark of tooth on his victims; which traits, when we come to think of them, are exactly those of the cur who has fallen into the evil habit of sheep-worrying. Such a canine criminal makes comparatively little use of his teeth; his passion is to get a flock on the run and keep them on the run till they fall and die of exhaustion or are driven into some corner where they pile one a-top of another to suffocation. Small wonder that the eighteenth-century shepherd and his forefathers, looking in the dawn upon scores of dead sheep without mark of external hurt, held this the doing of a supernatural

dog; fiery eyeballs and gleaming teeth were the inevitable "trimmings."

Even more of superstition has gathered about the cat than the dog. Some beliefs are very local and unknown to the world in general, as that prevalent in the County Cavan anent the evil portent of the cat's gaze; if, they say, after washing her face a cat fix you with an eye, beware! You shall die within twelve months. There must be exceptions to this rule, however; it is many years since a cat, Cavan born and bred though she was, bestowed upon me this attention, which should have proved fatal. In the County Clare the bachelor or spinster upon whom falls the gaze of the cat who has just washed her face will soon marry; but if she stare without reason the consequence will be fatal. This qualification is important, for who shall fathom the feline mind and the reasons by which it is swayed?

The learned amongst us have expended much inquiry in their endeavour to find out why there existed that mysterious affinity between cats and wind. The belief that cats could control the winds at their pleasure was widespread; and witches, needless to say, turned this talent to their own ends. The classic case of cat-raised storm is that in which the vessel bringing sundry jewels and rich gifts for Anne of Denmark, Queen of James VI., was sunk in the Firth of Forth in 1589. James, as we all know, was a convinced believer in witchcraft, and the affair was a sensation at the time. This, from the confession of Agnes Thompson, the prime mover in the business, who was brought to trial as a witch in 1591:—

"She with others did take a cat and christened it; and after bound it to a dead man; and the night following the said cat was conveyed into the midst of the sea by all these witches sailing in their riddles or sieves; and so left the said cat right before the town of Leith; which done there did arise such a tempest as a greater hath not been seen."



It was an eerie sight the sixteenth-century imagination might conjure up from that "confession"; but one's sympathies are with the cat; for we need not doubt that superstitious imbecility did take her out to sea and leave her in a sieve or riddle to drown.

Within living memory cats were held able to raise the wind on their own initiative. On the Mayo coast, according to local authority, the cats used to assemble from miles round to the number of sixty or seventy and create storms by their united effort. The method employed is not, unfortunately, on record. The Mayo cats could also restore calm if it pleased them, or they might be compelled to do it; wherefore the good wives, concerned for the safety of fisher husbands at sea when the weather grew boisterous, would catch their cats and put them in pots with the lid on. When the cats were thus persuaded to exert their powers (or wanted to get out) they "carded" at the sides of the pot-prison: calm might then be confidently anticipated. On the Highland coasts they used to raise the wind required for the sailing of the fishing fleet with the assistance of the cat; some fisherman had his wife pass the cat through the fire, when a favourable wind would spring up. The system was not as reliable as could be desired, because a storm might be raised—the cat subjected to such treatment is entitled to pardon if she thus revenged herself—and an alternative measure was to buy such a wind as should suit from a wise woman; but this cost sixpence, and your Highlander is chary of sixpences.

Black cat and witch walked ever hand in hand. It is safe to assume that the connection between the two dates from the time when old woman and cat first sat companionably over the fire, and the old woman, for lack of other hearer, talked to the cat. The dignified reticence with which the cat listens, suggesting as it does larger understanding than she is pleased to exercise for ordinary folk, was quite enough to earn the uncanny reputation that clings to her still.

MY REMINISCENCES.

By

HARRY GRATTAN.

MR. HARRY GRATTAN.
Photo. by James Bacon & Sons.

Most retiring of men, actor, author, artist, gardener, carpenter, revue-writer, and ardent lover of flowers, Harry Grattan here tells, specially for "The Strand Magazine," the story of his life.—Editor.

ONCE upon a time, long before children learned to love Little Lord Fauntleroy, years and years before Peter Pan arrived, there lived in London and the provinces "the little Grattans."

There were in all eight "little Grattans"—five sisters and three brothers. Their father—writer, actor, Bohemian—lived in the United States for many years, became a friend of Edgar Allan Poe, and started the American Actors' Benevolent Fund much more than half a century ago. As time went on "one little Grattan" joined the Army and went to South Africa with the Gloucestershires; the other little Grattans also naturally wandered into other sideways and by-ways of life; one of them—and it is on record that he still retains some plausible imitation of the light, springy figure of a boy—whose hair very early in life became white as driven snow, took to the stage as a means of earning bread and butter. The one I am referring to was Harry Grattan, whom I honestly believe I know better than anyone I have ever met in my life.

It was my father who was responsible for putting me on the stage to play Little Harry in "Uncle Tom's Cabin" when I was five years old.

When Mr. Joseph Jefferson came to London to play Rip Van Winkle your humble servant and his sister were, I understand, taken to that actor to see if they would suit for the parts. We were engaged at once. "What shall I do about teaching them?" said my father. "Don't," replied the great Rip; "leave them alone if you want them to act without knowing."

On that principle "the little Grattans" were educated and, as time went on, became, I am told, the most famous child-actors of their day. Little professionals to the tips of their fingers, even in those early days, I can still recall how I and my sister would turn our backs on the audience during a pathetic scene, make faces at each other, squeeze our eyes till they watered, and then look back again at the house with a sublime expression—and real tears!

After appearing at the Surrey Theatre in "Uncle Tom's Cabin"—some time after, by the way—I was engaged as principal boy in the children's pantomime which ran for three years at the Adelphi; my sister was principal girl; the harlequin, Miss Connie Gilchrist, who afterwards became Countess of Orkney, and Miss Katie Seymour were also in the cast.

AN EARLY PORTRAIT OF HARRY GRATTAN.

I would mention, by the way, that two of "the little Grattans" were members of Sir Squire and Lady Bancroft's company at the time of their greatest popularity. One evening a message was sent from the late King Edward (then Prince of Wales), who was in front, saying that he would come behind the scenes between the acts. There was a hasty consultation as to his reception. The two children listened with great interest, repeating to themselves "Your Royal Highness" a dozen times, but when the Prince really came they were both sent upstairs.

All the time he was in the green-room, however, they hung over the banisters, hoping to catch a glimpse of him as he went away. The door opened at last, the Prince came out, and at that very minute Katie Grattan, in her excitement, leaned too far forward, lost her balance, rolled down the stairs, and lay at the feet of the Royal visitor in a little heap of fright and dismay. The Prince laughingly picked her up and asked kindly, "Are you hurt, dear?" And she promptly invested him with a new title by gasping out, "No, please, I'm not, Your Very High!"

One of my earliest memories is of appearing as Arthur to the late Sir Henry Irving's Hubert at a benefit given at the Lyceum. "So you're an actor, are you?" said Sir Henry (then Mr., of course), patting me on the head at the first rehearsal. "Yes, Mr. Irving," I answered, with the confidence of youth. "I am learning, too, myself," said Irving, with his characteristic half-drawling mannerism.

I think it was that performance of Sir Henry's which affected my "theatrical mind" more than any I have ever seen since. Anyway, the thought often crosses my mind that I "felt" his performance as being more "real" than almost any other I have ever been privileged to witness.

"LITTLE PROFESSIONALS TO THE TIPS OF THEIR FINGERS"—HARRY GRATTAN AND HIS SISTER AS CHILD ACTORS.

After playing almost all the boy parts in almost all the productions in London, it goes without saying that I was perforce driven to playing grown-up *rôles*. I used to make a hobby of amusing myself by imitating Mr. Arthur Roberts, with the result that when that most popular of comedians was at the Avenue Theatre I applied for an engagement to understudy him, and was lucky enough to get it, at the same time being told that when not playing Mr. Roberts's part I was expected to sing in the chorus.

Now, I knew nothing about chorus-singing, and, having joined the company after the beginning of the run, another of my misfortunes was that I had no regular place on the stage. As a result, therefore, I found myself at one moment among the basses, and at other times among the tenors.

"This sort of thing won't do, Harry," I said to myself; "you'll be getting yourself in an awful tangle if you go on in this way." So I very amiably adapted my voice on every

occasion to the company. But "the plans of mice and men," etc.—my voice went "agley," anyway, for one night the musical conductor came up to me and asked whether I was a bass or tenor.

"I haven't the slightest idea," I replied, with unpardonable frankness. "Look here," answered the musical conductor with terseness, "I don't care about Jean de Reszke one minute and Signor Foli the next. You give us the goldfish part of the entertainment in future!"

"What on earth is the goldfish entertainment?"

"Open your mouth, but don't sing!"

Three weeks after that brutal action of "putting me in my place," and my voice in the right compass, the chance came to me of playing Mr. Roberts's part, and the following day I was given a contract for three years at eight, ten, and twelve pounds a week, and in due course I played not a few of the parts associated with the name of dear old Arthur.

But before I made any *real* hit in London I filled up not a few days of "resting" by writing and drawing for the lighter Press, and "turning out" lyrics for pantomime and musical comedy.

Emulating my father, I once tried to get on the staff of *Punch*, and sent what, in my respectful opinion, was a "funny" drawing to the editor. With this sketch I enclosed a letter in which I wrote: "If this drawing is good enough, will you please insert it? If not, kindly return it." In a day or two my letter came back accompanied by the drawing, but the "if" was scratched out, and, in front of the word "good" was written the word "not" in Sir Francis Burnand's writing.

Yes, in my early days I sampled not a few of the vicissitudes of life. Here is an example. In our wanderings with London's unconsidered remains of "Morocco Bound," Fred Storey and I were, once upon a time, booked for a week at the old Croydon Theatre, to which we paid a visit on the Sunday preceding the night of our opening to see what kind of a place it was.

It was an *un*kind rather than a kind sort of place. The theatre smelt horribly and everything was covered with dust, while the stage upon which Fred Storey was to do a lot of dancing, and not a little tumbling, was all over knots and bumps and splinters.

The orchestra provided by the theatre in those days was also a long way from being of the best. It consisted only of seven instrumentalists, including the conductor, who played the violin out of tune when tired of beating out of time. The singers had to stand close up to him throughout an entire song, so that they could whisper, or motion, instructions as to time; but the dancers fared worse, for they had to move about the stage and so get out of touch with the genius in the chair.

On that night—the night of our opening—Fred raised a tremendous laugh with what I shall ever remember as the champion "all-of-a-sudden" gag of the theatrical world. During his dance, which was one of the features of the performance, the orchestra had been "all over the place." He had tried to conduct it himself by beating time with his arms; but the men, with their eyes down, fiddled on in a hopelessly ragged fashion, each independent of the other, and none caring to risk making matters worse by looking at the erratic movements of their conductor.

The dance over, Fred Storey was walking through the wings when he met a carpenter sauntering along with a pot of hot glue. He seized it from the man's hand and, going on to the stage again, held it over the footlights to the conductor, who, in the confusion of the moment, or possibly thinking he was to pass it to someone under the stage, took it from the comedian without the slightest hesitation. The handle was very hot, and he asked somewhat loudly what the glue was for. In a voice that all in the house could hear, Fred answered, "That's for you to glue your band together with!" Then he walked off to a thunder of sympathetic applause and laughter.

In due course, after enjoying—and I really think I did enjoy them—not a few more vicissitudes, I arrived at the Gaiety Theatre, where I remained for quite a number of years—seven, at least, if my memory serves me—with Mr. George Edwardes, playing in many of his most popular productions and, incidentally, though few people knew it, writing songs, dialogue, and the like.

Those were good days at the Gaiety when poor little Teddy Payne, Teddy Lonnen, Lionel Mackinder (the first actor, I think, to lay down his life for King and country), George Grossmith, jun., Willie Ward, Gertie Millar, Marie Studholme, Olive May, Bobbie Nainby, Rosie Boote—now Marchioness of Headfort—and hosts of other popular favourites were at the zenith of their fame.

Never, I think, can there have been an actor possessed of a greater sense of loyalty and fidelity to his public than the late Teddy Payne. No matter whether he felt really ill

HARRY GRATTAN AND G. P. HUNTLY IN AN AMUSING SCENE FROM "BUYING A GUN."
Photos. by Ellis & Walery.

HARRY GRATTAN IN HIS WELL-KNOWN SKETCH, "THE PLUMBERS."

so Teddy. As best he could he finished the dance and, somehow or other—goodness only knows *how*—staggered to the wings, where he fell down in a dead faint.

He was at once carried to his dressing-room. A doctor was summoned, and a few minutes later, with considerable difficulty, his stage clothes were removed, when it was discovered that one of his legs—I think it was the right—had suffered a complete fracture on the shinbone just about half-way between the knee and ankle. How Teddy ever managed to finish that dance none but he will ever know, though I remember later on, when he was fit and well and about again, his remarking to me that "he finished it because he knew he *had* to finish it."

"Couldn't break faith with the public," he said, in characteristic "Teddy-Paynish" fashion, his kindly little, alert, humorous face lighting up with genuine delight at the remembrance that he had not broken that faith which meant so much to him—and the public, too, although they probably did not realize how loyally he always strove to give of his very best.

Yes, those Gaiety days were very, very good. We were all just a happy party together. How happy we were only those who have acted under less genial banners than those of the late Mr. George Edwardes will probably be able adequately to appreciate—but we were happy, anyway.

By the way, I have read in print more than once that a strong sense of humour was not one of Mr. Edwardes's most striking characteristics. With this point of view, however, I venture to differ, for I knew "the Guv'nor" extremely well, and always found him particularly humorous—either when extremely busy or when peeling an apple and drinking aerated water, a diet which he favoured at one time and another

or just half ill he always gave of his best, and on one occasion that I remember he gave an exhibition of almost heroic pluck.

At the time he was doing a duet, song and dance, with the late Katie Seymour. All went well as far as the song was concerned, but during the dance one of his legs suddenly gave way. Nine hundred and ninety-nine actors out of a thousand would have given up the struggle. But not

as being an effective antidote to ringing up a doctor.

On one occasion he was summoned to a Royal Command garden party, whereat a certain actor in the company remarked that this honour would benefit him socially to an enormous extent, as he would be sure to meet there various financial magnates rich beyond the dreams of avarice, and so on and so forth. "I've been asked to the Royal *garden*—not the back garden—party," said Mr. Edwardes, with characteristic terseness.

I wonder, by the way, whether those hundreds of thousands of well-meaning picture-postcard collectors ever realize what hard work their applications for signatures mean to the particular favourite to whom they send their cards? It was during my Gaiety days that the picture-postcard craze first sprang into popularity. Pretty, charming, humorous Marie Studholme was one of the first actresses to start the world-wide collecting craze.

From early morn till late at night heavily-laden postmen shot postcards of Marie Studholme, each one requesting a signature, into the stage door of the Gaiety. Many an actress would surely have been justified in continuing the shooting of the said postcards into the waste-paper basket. But not so Miss Studholme. For at least three hours a day she would sit at the desk in her dressing-room signing picture-postcards.

More than once I offered to come to Miss Studholme's rescue by copying her signature. But she always refused my well-meant assistance. Like Teddy Payne, she simply could not break faith with her public, and every communication sent to her received a courteous and well-thought-out answer, for people did not always want signed picture-postcards; they asked for all sorts of other things, from a recipe for giving someone suffering with nettle-rash a Marie Studholme complexion, down to "Can you tell me how a parlour-maid can become a Gaiety favourite in three weeks in her spare time?"

My association in earnest with the music-halls began at the Palace, where I and Fred Storey played "Prudes on the Prowl." Its success led me to play the part in "Man the Brute," which I had written for Dan Leno. "Man the Brute" ran for three years, and was followed by my sketch, "The Plumbers," in which I played a boy, and which has since been played on five battleships and at every music-hall in the world.

Not very long ago Fate decreed that I should lapse into still another *rôle*.

"Odds and Ends," produced some two years ago at the Ambassadors' Theatre, enabled me to make my bow to the public as a writer of revues. This revue attained very considerable success, and its successors, "More" and "Some," proved still more to the public liking.

And yet, after having written five or six successful revues, I am no wiser than ever as to what particular qualities are essential to a popular success.

To a very great extent I think the vogue for revue these days is a natural result of the times in which we live.

In my opinion revues would not have attained their far-reaching popularity but for the natural desire of all classes for brightness, for music, for humour—for anything, in fine, which will relieve the mental stress of the moment.

I have often been asked, by the way, how long it takes to write a revue. Well, of course, the length of time depends on whether the revue author is a slow or a quick worker. I once knew an author—no names, thank you—who has committed many enormities of this kind, who spent several weeks in engaging a number of well-known principals and several more weeks in signing contracts with a whole bevy of beautiful chorus and show ladies. His next step was to engage a well-known writer of revue music to attend to "the tunes and jingles." This done, he remarked cheerily to the producer, "Well, everything's all right now; I think I'll just go home for a bit." "Why go home — what for?" was the reply. "I must go home to write the revue," said the author; and this, I may tell you, is a fact. I might also add that the revue was a success.

MRS. GRATTAN.
Photo. by the Dover Street Studios.

The Barnes Mystery

AN ADVENTURE OF JUDITH LEE.

By RICHARD MARSH.

Illustrated by W. R. S. Stott.

THE Barnes Mystery was the topic of the day. It had the place of honour in all the papers. Mrs. Netherby was a widow lady who occupied, with a maidservant, a small detached house in the Shelbourne Road, Barnes, called Oak Villa. She and the maid, whose name was Mary Freeman, were the only persons in the house. The maid was ailing. On the morning of Friday, March 22nd, the medical man in attendance, Dr. Anson, diagnosed her case as one of typhoid fever. The usual notices were at once sent to the authorities, and on the afternoon of that day she was taken away to the hospital. Her mistress, Mrs. Netherby, was left alone in the house. From the moment in which the ambulance took Mary Freeman away, no one ever again saw Mrs. Netherby alive.

On Saturday morning Dr. Anson called in the ordinary round of his practice to inquire how the old lady was getting on. The blinds were all down, the house seemed empty. He knocked and he rang, but, receiving no answer, he went away. He took it for granted that Mrs. Netherby had left the house to itself and gone to stay with her friends or relatives. Various tradesmen called in the usual way, but, no notice being taken of their presence, they departed again. So far as was known, no one else came to the house till the Tuesday following, March 26th. On the evening of that day her married daughter, Mrs. Penton, came with her husband, George Penton, to call on her mother.

The Pentons lived at Putney. They had been away for the week-end to Westcliff-on-Sea. From there Mrs. Penton had written to her mother, asking her to spend the evening with them on the following Tuesday. She received no answer at Westcliff; on her return home on Tuesday morning she found none awaiting her. When in the evening she did not appear, she went over to Barnes with her husband to learn why it was her mother had taken no notice whatever of her letter.

It was about seven o'clock when the Pentons reached Oak Villa. When they entered the gate a light showed through the blind of the front room on the upper floor.

"Why," exclaimed Mrs. Penton, "there's only a light in mother's bedroom. Whatever is the matter?"

It was Mrs. Netherby's habit after nightfall to have a light in every room as well as in the hall. She would smilingly say that she liked lights for company. Mrs. Penton had a peculiar knock, which she used as a sort of signal to let her mother know that it was she who was there. Mr. Penton, who was standing at the foot of the steps, noticed that the moment she knocked the light in the upper room vanished.

"What's the matter with Mary?" asked Mrs. Penton. "She's generally so quick."

"The light in your mother's room has gone out," her husband said. "Perhaps she's coming down."

"She's pretty long about it." Mrs. Penton knocked again. Again there was no sign that she had been heard. She broke into nervous speech: "George, there's something wrong; I feel sure there's something wrong. Whatever can be the matter?"

They became alarmed. They went round the house to the kitchen at the back. It was in darkness; the back of the house was as dark as the front.

They were aware that Mrs. Netherby had all her windows secured with patent fasteners. It would not be easy to gain access to the house without resorting to actual violence.

"Whatever shall we do?" In the darkness and the cold Mrs. Penton drew closer to her husband's side, as if in the atmosphere of mystery which surrounded the shrouded house she felt that there was something uncanny.

"George, what's that? It sounded like——"

"George!" She clung to his arm with a grip which he all at once recognized was hysterical. He did his best to calm her; by the time he succeeded it was too late. No one knew who it was who opened and shut the front door and went out of the gate. Had Mrs. Penton permitted her husband to do as he wished—to rush off to see—the

"THE SERGEANT, MRS. PENTON, AND MR. THOMAS AND HIS SON ENTERED THE HOUSE."

He cut her short. "It sounded like someone opening and shutting the front door."

"George!" He was rushing off; she clung to his arm. "Don't leave me! George, don't leave me!"

"Then for goodness' sake come too; only be quick about it. I'm going to see who came out of the front door."

mystery might have ceased to be a mystery that very first night.

In the adjacent house there was a family of four, a Mr. and Mrs. Thomas and their grown-up son and daughter. Mr. Thomas was a solicitor. He suggested that they should send to the police-station for some person in authority, and then take his advice about breaking into the house. In due

course a sergeant appeared on the scene with two constables. In his presence a pane was taken out of the kitchen window at the back. George Penton slipped through; then opened the back door.

The sergeant, Mrs. Penton, and Mr. Thomas and his son entered the house. The party went all over the house, lighting the gas in each room as they came to it, but found nothing. It was empty.

There was only one thing in the whole house which struck the searchers as peculiar. On the strip of carpet which ran along one side of Mrs. Netherby's bed there was a damp patch—not only damp, but actually wet, as though someone had quite recently spilt something on it. The Pentons had seen the light shining through the blind of that apartment. Someone had been in there when they knocked at the door and left that patch of wet. Who was it?

The strip of carpet was submitted to an analyst, who reported that there was nothing unusual about the carpet at all—for instance, that there was no trace of blood.

The problem presented was—what had become of Mrs. Netherby? She seemed to have vanished off the face of the earth. One or two facts made the problem more acute. On the Friday the maid had been taken to the hospital the old lady had been left in the house alone. On the Monday morning no fewer than twenty-three cheques bearing her signature had been presented in different quarters and cashed—not one of them at her bankers'. They had been drawn up for various amounts and changed by tradesmen with whom she had been more or less in the habit of dealing. She was a well-to-do old lady, and her credit was good in many quarters. Someone must have had an intimate knowledge of what those quarters were. In each instance the process had been the same. A woman had entered the shop, had announced that she had come from Mrs. Netherby, of Oak Villa, Barnes, had ordered goods which she paid for on the spot with a cheque which was always much larger than the bill, and had gone off with the change. In each case the woman had informed them in the shop that Mrs. Netherby had gone away for a little change, and the goods were to be sent to her at the address she gave, which was in each case a different address, but always at an hotel. It was afterwards found that the goods were at the hotels awaiting the arrival of the person to whom they had been addressed.

That was peculiarity number one. The aggregate of the twenty-three cheques reached a considerable amount—within a few pounds of the sum which was standing to Mrs. Netherby's credit at the bank. Apparently someone, knowing how much she had there, did not wish to cause friction by overdrawing.

A third significant fact came to light. On the Monday morning, being the third day after Mary Freeman had been taken away in the ambulance, a woman called at the offices of a safe deposit company, having with her what purported to be a letter from Mrs. Netherby, in which she stated that she was in bad health and unable to leave home, and requesting them to give the bearer access to her safe. The bearer had Mrs. Netherby's own pass-key; she gave her name as Mary Freeman. They permitted her to have access to the safe. When authority stepped in and the safe was examined, it was found to be empty; whatever it had contained "Mary Freeman" had taken away.

Many of the Press comments were by no means relished at Scotland Yard, as was shown by a conversation which took place one evening in a room of that national centre for the suppression of crime and the discovery of criminals.

"Well, Davis, have you seen the special *Evening Screecher?*"

Inspector Davis, to whom the question was addressed, made a sound which was scarcely suggestive of pleasure.

"I have seen the thing. It's easy enough for those newspaper fellows to talk and write. It's another thing to have to make bricks without straw."

"Which means, I suppose, that you've still no news of Mrs. Netherby, or of anything? The 'Barnes Mystery,' as the *Screecher* puts it, is still a mystery, and likely to remain so."

"I can only tell you, Mr. Ellis, that I've done everything which, while English law remains what it is, it is possible for a man to do. Any suggestion——"

"One moment; let me see who that is." The bell of the telephone which was on the table at which Mr. Ellis was seated was calling. He took up the receiver. "Yes?"

A voice came to him. "What place is that?"

"This is Scotland Yard."

"Who are you?"

"I'm Stephen Ellis. Who's speaking?"

The question was ignored. "Do you want to solve the Barnes Mystery?"

Mr. Ellis returned question for question. "Who are you?"

The answer came. "If you want to solve the Barnes Mystery, be at the Regent Circus entrance to the Café Poncini in half an hour. Wear some primroses with some violets in the centre in your buttonhole. Bring two or three plain-clothes men—not with you, and don't be seen talking to them, but let them be handy. You understand?"

The voice ceased. When Mr. Ellis spoke again he received no answer, although he tried three or four times.

"I wonder," he said, as he hung up the receiver, "if someone's playing another fool's trick?" He reported to the inspector the brief conversation he had had with someone unknown. "I'm going to the Café Poncini; I'll go myself. You'd better be there too, Davis, and have two or three men within call. I dare say someone is having another joke with us; but things are getting to a point at which I'm going to throw no chances away."

Half an hour later Stephen Ellis entered the hall of the Café Poncini. The moment he did so—before he had even time to glance about him—someone came up to him. "Good evening, Mr. Ellis. You're well on time."

The speaker was a woman, scarcely more than a girl; at the first glance she struck Mr. Ellis as distinctly pretty.

"Was it you who telephoned?"

"Come inside and have some coffee. We shall be able to do all the talking that's necessary better in there." She led the way into the *café*, with its long rows of marble-topped tables.

On one side of each row of tables a long settee runs from end to end of the Café Poncini, covered in red velvet. The woman selected a lounge; at her invitation Mr. Ellis seated himself beside her.

"Order some coffee; we can take our time over drinking it."

The coffee was ordered. While it was coming Ellis eyed his companion, she submitting to his keen scrutiny with what struck him as almost laughing indifference. She was pretty, distinctly, but her most prominent characteristic was vitality.

"Who are you?" he asked, when the coffee came, "and what have you brought me here for?"

"I'm a thought-reader," she replied.

"Then, if you can read my thoughts, I wonder what you think of them?"

"I don't care about your thoughts. I look at people's faces. I not only know what they are thinking, without hearing—I know what they are saying. Look at those two young men at the end table: the one with the moustache is telling the other about a girl who sat beside him on the seat of the omnibus on which he came from Walham Green. He is saying that she gave him her address; he is reading it from the piece of paper which he has taken from his pocket; he is saying 'Ruth Dennis, 21, Barkham Road, Parson's Green—see, that's the address she gave me. I wrote it down, so that there might be no mistake. I shouldn't be surprised if one of these days before long I looked her up'—I've reported the words exactly as he uttered them; if you doubt the accuracy of my report, if you'll go and ask him you'll find that you've done me an injustice. Here's our man—the one who just came in at the door, with the clean-shaven face. He's going to sit at that empty table on the left opposite us. He's given himself into our hands; at that distance a man with a clean-shaven face can hide nothing from me."

"Is this a trick you're trying to play on me, counting on the proverbial stupidity of the police? Who is this man? And, by the way, what's your name?"

"Never mind my name. I don't know our man's name, but he is our man, as you'll find. Presently he will be joined by a companion."

Even as she spoke someone entering stood for a moment to look about him. Seeing the man alone at the table, he hastened to him. The new-comer was a short, sturdily-built young man, with a square jaw.

"Bother him!" exclaimed the woman at Mr. Ellis's side. "He's placed himself with his back to us. I sha'n't be able to tell you what he says, but I dare say we shall get enough from the other."

The new-comer had placed himself on a chair fronting the first arrival. Apparently they exchanged no greetings, but plunged at once into subdued conversation.

"You drink your coffee," said the woman to Mr. Ellis. "Don't look their way. I'll do all the watching that's needed; they won't suspect me." There was a momentary interval. "He says he's got it."

"Got what?"

"You'll see for yourself before long—he's got what will hang them."

"Let me give you a word of advice, young lady. Don't push your jest too far; what do you take me for?"

To judge from his tone Mr. Ellis was getting angry.

"If you think I'm having a jest with you, you can always go. The best thing you can do is to keep still." After an interval she asked, "Did you bring those men with you?"

"I did. You yourself are likely to find their presence awkward if you push your jest too far."

The man who had entered last had risen from his seat. Something in the woman's manner influenced Mr. Ellis in a fashion which rather surprised himself. He rose also. The woman whispered:—

"He says he's going to the Empire. We shall first have to follow him there. Wait for me outside."

"IN THE LOUNGE THEY SAW THEIR QUARRY TALKING TO A WOMAN."

"Don't be silly. Fetch one of them in here. Tell him to keep an eye on the man who came in first and, when he goes, to follow him. He's not to lose him, and he's to report to you his whereabouts. The other one is going presently; you and I will have to follow him. Send in your man—quick!"

Ellis went; something in her manner seemed to compel him. As she was settling with the waiter for the coffee, Inspector Davis came sauntering in. The square-faced man went out; the woman followed. She found Ellis without. The square-faced man was moving along Coventry Street, towards Leicester Square.

"How do you know he's going to the Empire?" asked Ellis, as he walked by the woman's side.

"I saw him say so."

"I don't know what you mean when you say you saw him say a thing when you couldn't hear a word."

"These things may be unfolded to you later. In the meantime, you see he is going to the Empire, so thus far I'm right." The man turned into the entrance of the Empire Theatre. "We'd better go in after him. I don't fancy he will stay long; he's after other game to-night."

In the lounge they saw their quarry talking to a woman. It was easy for them to stand and watch.

"He's just said to her," observed Mr. Ellis's companion, "that he's very sorry that business has turned up which it is impossible for him to neglect. Now he's going. The question is—is it easier to follow a man in a taxi or a hansom?"

"In a taxi," replied Ellis.

He was becoming interested in this young woman, almost in spite of himself. He had no doubt that she was playing a trick on him of some sort. He was beginning to wonder what was the point of it, what was her object, how far she was going. Presently the square-faced man had gone off in a taxi, closed. Had it not been closed he might have become conscious that close behind him kept another taxi, whose top was open. After they had gone some little distance the woman in the second taxi said to Mr. Ellis:—

"Is there a big hospital near?"

"There's the Surrey Hospital just ahead of us."

"Can you pick up a constable or two as we go along? They may be wanted later."

The taxi in front turned into a side street. The second driver spoke to his passengers.

"The chap in front has pulled up—had I better wait and see what's going to happen?"

It was the woman who answered.

"Wait till I give you the word." She spoke to her companion. "We may have a minute or two to wait—now's your time to pick up your constables; they may come in handy very soon. There are a couple at the corner over the road."

Getting out of the cab and going to where a couple of policemen were standing on the other side of the street, he returned with them.

The policemen, acting on Mr. Ellis's instructions, managed to squat themselves on the bottom of the vehicle, holding their helmets in their hands. Hardly were they in their places when the driver said:—

"That chap's going off. What I know of this street, there's only one turning out of it, and that brings you back into the Southwark Road. If we go quietly on he'll come to us."

The man proved to be right. Soon a taxi came out of a turning a little way down the road, which the driver of the second cab declared to be the one they were chasing. The chase continued.

"I wonder if he's got it?" said the woman to Mr. Ellis, in tones which were only intended to reach his ears.

"Got what?"

"What will hang him."

Mr. Ellis's tone was irascible. "If you could only manage to be a little more explicit, and not deal so much in mysteries!"

They went on perhaps the better part of another mile. Then the second taxi slowed. The driver said to them:—

"That other chap's stopping at the hospital; his passenger is getting out."

The woman said to the driver: "Take us up to the door—and stop there." Then to Mr. Ellis: "We shall have to follow him into the hospital; you must make it clear to the porter that we must see him at once, before he's had a chance of getting rid of what he's got."

They got out of the taxi at the door of a great grey building. In the hall a uniformed porter advanced to meet them. Mr. Ellis addressed him in tones of authority.

"I want you to take me immediately to the gentleman who has just come in."

The porter hesitated. "What's your name and business? He may be engaged and not wish to be disturbed."

"I'm an officer of police from Scotland Yard. Your business is to take me to him at once without an instant's delay."

Still the porter dallied. "I believe he's gone to the dissecting-room."

"Where is the dissecting-room? Take us there at once."

The porter led the way and the others followed; the woman and Mr. Ellis in front, the two policemen behind. The porter paused outside a door.

"This is the dissecting-room."

"Stop!" said the woman. Then, to Mr. Ellis: "Let the two policemen stay outside until you call them in. Now open the door."

The porter did as he was bid. Ellis and the woman went into the room. Only one person was in the room, the man they had

been following. He was standing by one of the tables, busy with something which he had taken out of a small, square parcel.

"Halloa!" he exclaimed, as he heard the door open behind him. "Who's that?"

The woman strode forward, Ellis at her side.

"You see!" she exclaimed, pointing to the ghastly object which the man was holding as like another man—like one who was suddenly afraid. Words came from him.

"Who told you—Anson?"

"Anson! That's the name I couldn't catch," the woman cried. "What an idiot I am! I might have guessed—that's the name of the man who was in attendance on her at Barnes. Take this man, and then off for Dr. Anson—quick! He's the man you're

"'WHAT NONSENSE IS THIS?' CRIED DR. LINTOTT."

nonchalantly as if it were some unconsidered trifle.

"Who the deuce are you?" he demanded. He turned to the porter. "Simpson, what do you mean by letting these people in here?"

"That," said the woman, "is Mrs. Netherby's head. I rather fancy it is all that is left of her."

The man stared at the woman. Something seemed to pass from her eyes to his. He changed countenance, looking all at once wanting most. This gentleman will hardly deny that what he's holding is the head of the late Mrs. Netherby, of Barnes."

"What's your name?" asked Ellis.

"I'm Dr. Lintott. I'm one of the house-surgeons. What's the meaning of this intrusion? Who are you, sir?"

"I'm an officer of police, and I arrest you for being concerned in the murder of Mrs. Netherby, of Barnes." He called the two policemen into the room. "Take your prisoner."

"What nonsense is this?" cried Dr. Lintott.

"You need not answer my question; you need say nothing. You heard what this lady said. Is that Mrs. Netherby's head which you have in your hand?"

"How am I to know whose head it is? It's a subject which I brought here for dissection in the ordinary course. I'm going to give a demonstration on it to-morrow."

"I tell you it is the head of the late Mrs. Netherby, to his knowledge, and for that statement I accept full responsibility. Don't chop phrases with him—something tells me that if we are not quick we shall be too late for Dr. Anson."

In spite of his protests Dr. Lintott was handcuffed, and was presently borne off, a prisoner, in the same taxi-cab which had brought him, with the two policemen as companions. That dreadful human relic went with them in the cab.

Mr. Ellis dashed across London, the woman at his side, in the second taxi. It is a long way from the Surrey Hospital to Barnes. Mr. Ellis plied his companion with questions to which he received no answers.

"What you have to do," she told him, "is to solve the Barnes Mystery. Before you go to sleep to-night you'll have done it. My part in the business doesn't matter. I'll give you all the explanations you're entitled to—when we have finished. Something tells me, as if it were something in my bones, that the chief criminal is slipping away from us, even while we're rushing to him."

The cab stopped. Someone who was standing on the pavement came towards them. Ellis spoke:—

"Who's this? Why, Davis, is that you?"

"The man you told me to shadow was Dr. Anson."

"You traced Dr. Anson home?" asked the woman.

"I did. He came by train to Barnes Station, then walked."

"Do you think he knew that he was being followed?"

"I think he may have had his doubts. He stopped twice and looked round."

"And saw you?"

"That I cannot say."

"But you think it possible?" The inspector was silent. "I see; that explains my premonition."

Leaving the taxi where it was, the three approached the house on foot. The inspector remained at the gate, while the others went to the front door, which was almost instantly opened by a trim maid.

"Can I see Dr. Anson?" asked Ellis. The maid invited them in; she said she would see. "Where is he?" She pointed to a door at the other end of the little hall. "I will announce myself." Mr. Ellis moved to the door to which she had pointed. He turned the handle. "This door is locked." He tapped at the panel; no answer. Again, very loudly; no reply. He thumped it with the palm of his open hand. "Inside there! Dr. Anson!" Still silence. He turned to the maid. "You are sure Dr. Anson is in this room?"

"Dr. Anson went in there; I saw him go. I haven't heard him come out."

"You'll have to force the door," said the woman.

Ellis struck it a violent blow with his shoulder. It showed no signs of yielding. He went to the hall door and called out.

"Davis!" The inspector came across the garden. "The servant says Dr. Anson is in his study. The door is locked, and I can't get him to pay any attention to my knocking—I'm going to force it open."

"Let me see the door," said Davis. "There are very few rooms in modern houses which I can't open."

He was a big, heavy man, nearly six feet high. He wrapped a great handkerchief round his knuckles, then drove his right fist with all his might against the panel of the door. It went through it as if the panel had been made of paper. He glanced through the aperture which he had made.

"He's in there, on a chair at the table; but there's something wrong."

He enlarged the aperture by striking the panel a second time; then, putting his arm through, got down to the key, which was in the lock, turned it, and the door was open. They all went in; then they saw that, as Davis had said, there was something wrong. Dr. Anson was leaning back in his elbow-chair in a quite natural attitude, but he was dead. The inspector touched his skin.

"He is quite warm; he can only have been dead a few minutes."

Ellis stooped to the dead man's mouth.

"It's cyanide; he probably took it when he heard me knocking. Death was no doubt instantaneous."

"As I said, he knew that he was followed, and he understood. He probably recognized your knock as the knell of doom. I think that my presence is no longer needed."

This was the woman. She turned as if to go. Davis interposed.

"Excuse me, but your presence is needed more than ever. There's a great deal that will have to be explained."

"That is easily done—probably in less than five minutes."

She looked at Ellis. Even in the grim presence of Death one could see that there was a twinkle in her eyes.

"I'm a teacher of the deaf and dumb—that is the explanation."

Ellis looked puzzled. "But, pardon me, I don't see that that explains anything."

"On the contrary, it explains everything. I teach lip reading; that is, I teach deaf and dumb people to speak and to understand other people speak by observing, and imitating, the motions which the lips make in pronouncing words. I'm an expert teacher. My father and mother are teachers. Wherever I am I have only to look about me at people's faces, and if they are talking I can tell you what they are saying."

"Is that really a fact?"

"I've given you one very good proof to-night. Last night I was in the Café Poncini. Two men were seated in front of me—one was this man, the other was Dr. Lintott. It was rather late. I fancy Dr. Lintott had been dining pretty well. It was the fact that he seemed to have drunk quite enough which caused me first of all to notice him. They had evidently both of them something to do with medicine, probably doctors. They were talking about subjects for dissection—the difficulty of obtaining them. Suddenly Dr. Lintott said something which struck me: 'I suppose we've nearly finished with your old woman of Barnes?' The other man said nothing. Dr. Lintott went on, ticking his words off on his fingers. 'She's been an educational force to all the hospitals in London. The way in which, without rousing the slightest suspicion, I've helped you to be rid of Mrs.——' The other man cut him short. 'I wish you wouldn't talk like that,' I saw him say. 'I won't,' said Dr. Lintott; 'but as an educational force you certainly must allow me to drink to Mrs. N. I saw him say 'Mrs. N.' most distinctly. I almost jumped as he said it. He had already spoken of the 'old woman of Barnes,' and I at once thought of Mrs. Netherby; there was an evening paper in front of me, in which the chief topic was the Barnes Mystery."

"How far," asked Ellis, "were these two men from you?"

"They were two tables farther down on the other side. I had a perfect view of their faces."

"It's a very uncanny power which you seem to have."

"It's not uncanny at all. But to continue about last night. I saw Dr. Lintott say, 'Now, tell me, have you got rid of the whole of her?' The other man hesitated. Then he said, 'There remains the head.' They whispered together for some moments. At last Lintott got up. I could see him say, 'Then to-morrow night, some convenient place?' 'Quite—where you can get it on your road back.' Then Lintott went away; then the other went; and last of all I went."

The woman held out her hands with a little, quaint gesture.

"The more I thought of it, the more convinced I became that the 'old woman of Barnes,' 'Mrs. N.,' was Mrs. Netherby, of Oak Villa, and that I held in my hand the key of what all the world was beginning to regard as an insoluble puzzle. That these two men were criminals, to my mind, was clear; but how was I to make it clear to the official mind? I hesitated, and at the last moment I telephoned. You are now in a position, I think, in which the Barnes Mystery is likely to continue a mystery no longer."

"There's one detail you have still omitted—your name."

"My name is Judith Lee."

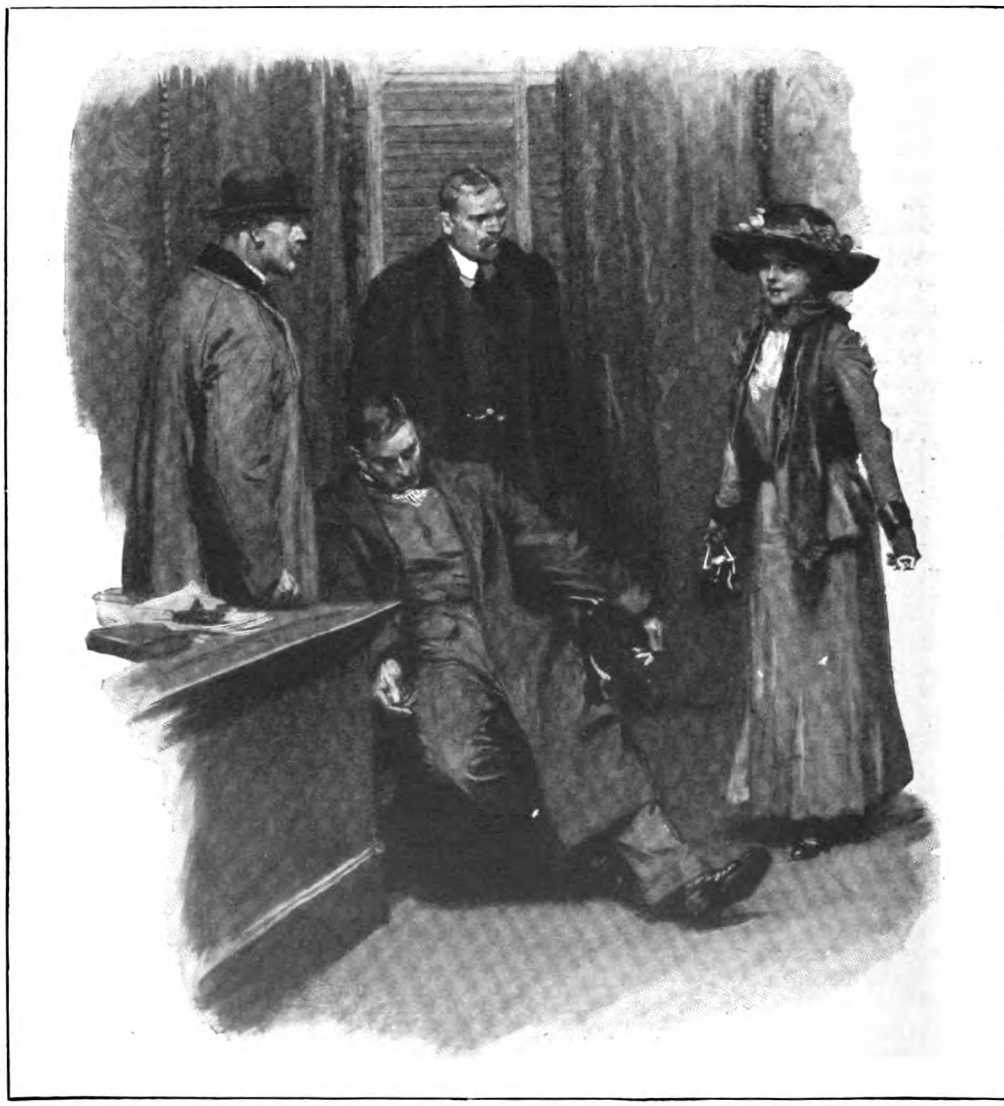
"Still one moment." Mr. Ellis checked her as again she turned to go. "There seems to be something here which you may find of interest."

The dead man sat at his writing-table. In front of him was a large blotting-pad. On it were sheets of paper closely covered with writing. Over these was a half-sheet on which were a few lines. Mr. Ellis read aloud from the half-sheet:—

"'Three men got into my train at Waterloo. I had my suspicions directly I saw them. They got out with me at Barnes; they were the only persons who did. They did their best to conceal the fact, but I was aware that they followed me from the station home. I feel that in the pocket of each one is a pair of handcuffs. I understand. Every second I expect a knocking at the front door; when it comes, I go. I shall have gone before they get from the front door to this room. The MS. on which I am going to lay this half-sheet of paper contains notes which may save a certain amount of trouble.' He must

have written that, Davis, while you were waiting for me in the road outside." Mr. Ellis took up the sheets of paper, which were covered with writing. "I presume these are the notes to which he refers."

They were. They are at present in the archives of Scotland Yard, forming as singular a document as is to be found in the annals of criminal literature.



"I'M A TEACHER OF THE DEAF AND DUMB—THAT IS THE EXPLANATION."

From these notes it appeared that Dr. Anson, whose expenses far exceeded his professional income, was hard pressed for ready cash. A friend named Lintott, who was one of the house-surgeons at the Surrey Hospital, was in similar straits. They were boon companions; birds of a feather. One evening they had been discussing their common necessities. Lintott asked Anson if he had no patient of whom he could dispose, and by whose disposal they could replenish their exhausted coffers. The question was jokingly asked. Anson took it in earnest. His thoughts flew to Mrs. Netherby. She seemed to be very much alone in the world,

and to be possessed of sufficient means. He might get a clearer idea of her exact pecuniary position in the course of a day or two.

According to Anson's own statement, the two men talked Mrs. Netherby over together as if she had been a lay figure who might turn out to be worth to them a considerable sum of money. It would be easy to kill her; the difficulty would be in the disposal of the remains. Lintott said that there need be no difficulty about that. If a reasonable amount of time might be reckoned on, she could be dismembered at her own house, and the different parts of her body could be distributed among the various London hospitals for the purposes of dissection.

On Friday, March 22nd, it became clear that the servant-girl had typhoid. Anson communicated with the authorities, and on the Friday afternoon she was taken away. He was present in the house at the time, remaining after she had been removed. He stated in his confession that it was only after she had been removed and he was left alone in the house with the old lady that it occurred to him what a magnificent opportunity it would be to put into practice what he and Lintott had talked about a few evenings before. He declared that the temptation came to him in a form which he found it impossible to resist. Ten minutes after the maid had been taken away her mistress was dead; he had killed her. He then overhauled her papers, to find that she had a satisfactory balance at her bank, and documents of considerable value in the vault of a safe deposit company. He put the body of the old lady under a bed which was shrouded by a valance which reached the floor, put her papers in his pocket, and went his round. The next morning he called, and, in the presence of his coachman, he knocked and rang, without any notice being taken. He said to his coachman that he supposed the old lady had left the house and gone to stay with friends.

He telegraphed to Lintott, who that night came to see him. He told him what he had done. When Lintott heard what a large sum she had left at her bank he seems to have acquiesced without remonstrance.

Dr. Lintott was an amateur actor. He had acted female parts in musical comedies with striking success. According to Anson he made almost a perfect girl. He was also an expert penman. He forged cheques for the lady's entire balance and, garbed as a woman, presented them at her various tradesmen's shops without suspicion having been once aroused. In another feminine disguise, with a forged order, he went to the old lady's safe in the vault of the deposit company and cleared it out. The securities, however, were of a kind which it would be dangerous to negotiate.

The old lady was dismembered by Dr. Anson at night in the empty house, and the various parts were handed to Lintott, who distributed them among medical students of his acquaintance. On the Tuesday evening on which Mrs. Penton called to see her mother Anson had gone to Oak Villa to perform a double task: to remove all that was left of his victim—the head—and to get rid of a tell-tale stain which, in spite of all his precautions, was on the carpet by the old lady's bed. His sensations when he heard the knocking at the door are graphically described. He instantly put out the light, and with the head in a cardboard box in his hand he hastened downstairs. When the would-be visitors went to the back of the house, he opened the front door and slipped out.

Whether, in all their details, the statements in Anson's MS. were perfectly correct has never been ascertained. Lintott was as prepared for emergencies as his accomplice. In spite of his handcuffs, on the road to the police-station he managed to reach his mouth. All at once the two policemen found that they had with them in the taxi-cab a corpse. He had left behind him no papers of any kind which threw light upon the story which Anson had told, but among his belongings was a large quantity of feminine wearing apparel. One of the dresses was recognized by some of the tradesmen who had cashed the cheques as having been worn by the woman who presented them. Officials at the safe deposit company had no doubt that a second had been worn by the woman who came in Mrs. Netherby's name.

HOW TO MAKE THE PIANO SING.

By

MARK HAMBOURG.

MARK HAMBOURG.

From a Drawing by R. G. Matthews.

WHAT is the most elusive and difficult thing to teach, and yet at the same time the most necessary of all the powers which a pianist must acquire to be successful in his art? Is it not surely the power to produce a fine, noble singing tone from his instrument?

The study of tone on the pianoforte in all its infinite varieties of loudness and softness, of roundness, of purity, of abruptness, of sensuousness, is as intricate and absorbing as anything in the world of musical technic. For it combines within itself not only the highest technical attainment, but also much that properly belongs to the province of interpretation and inspiration.

Looking at the piano merely from the standpoint of a mechanical instrument, it is wonderful to realize how much can be done by the skill and taste of the player to vary and qualify the sound it gives out. Constantly people are heard to say, "How he makes the instrument sing!" This is the kernel of the whole matter—namely, to "make the instrument sing." It is not enough to play clearly, to play fast, to play slowly, to play loudly, to play softly; all these different gradations must be alive with the requisite tone to make them real and atmospheric.

Tone represents to the pianist what colour does to the painter, and some artists possess a finer perception of that quality than others. Besides, some pianists are not mainly interested in the study of tone, but are content with striking the keys always more or less in the same way, either loud or soft, or mezzoforte, as the case may be. In the performance of the more modern and romantic schools of musical compositions such as Chopin and Schumann, and those of our own day, this indifference to variety of tone will pass muster more or less easily, as this kind of music is in itself generally so full of colour and elaborate harmony in its combinations of sound, and

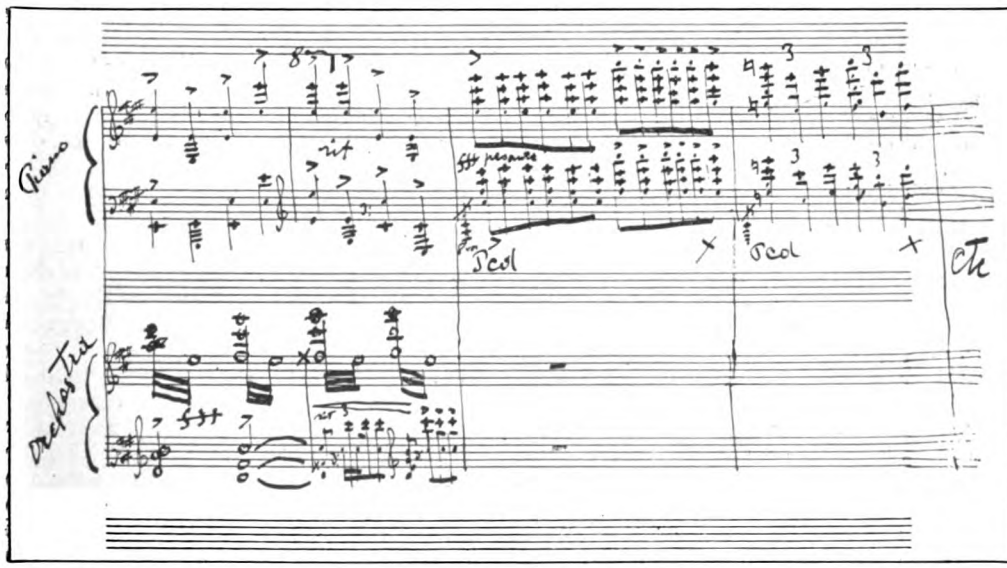
therefore the lack of much subtlety of tone on the player's part will not be so much felt. And this more especially upon the modern pianoforte, which yields a good full tone without any effort if not struck too directly. But when playing classical music a dry or prosaic tone is a terrible drawback, and for this reason one will often hear people who are really musical complain that they find the works of Bach, for instance, dull. And why? Only because, I am quite sure, their music has always been presented to such people with a dead and monotonous delivery. Whereas if each chord, each phrase, each melody were reverently thought out and made to glow with beauty and variety of tone, all the glory and worth of the great music could be brought home to those very listeners who before were wearied by it.

Beauty, and with it variety, of tone can be obtained on the pianoforte by several means. Rhythm has something to do with it. Pressure of the fingers when striking the notes affects it; suppleness and elasticity of the wrists help to attain it. In melody, tone should be caressed out of the piano, melting one note into another by an undulating movement of the hand. In sparkling technical passages it should be outlined concisely by means of rhythm, in the way of accents in some places, and in others by careful divisions of values, with regard to the balance of light and shade in the structure of the passage. Such conciseness of tone will produce a fine relief for the technical ornamentations and impart to them vigour and brilliance.

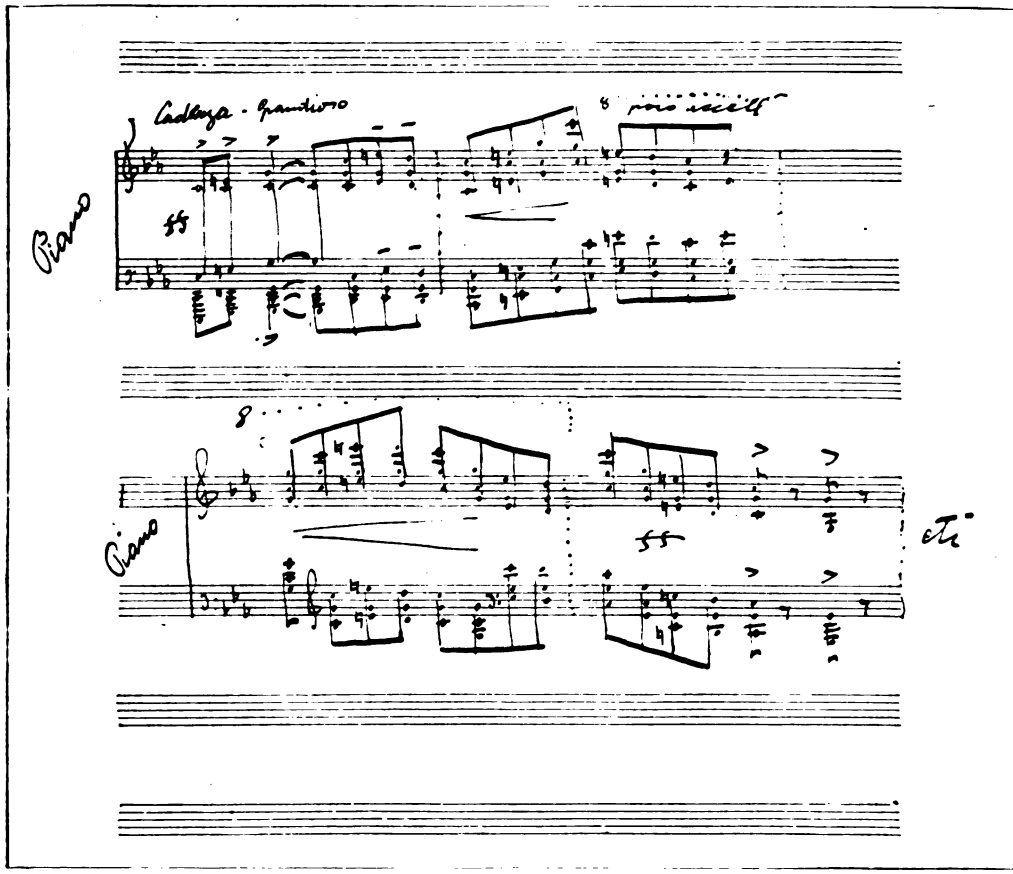
Great power of tone is very difficult to produce without harshness, for chords struck with direct and powerful blows of the hand will emit hard, metallic sounds that must shock the ear. But if the strength is concentrated and applied through the forearm to the keys, the fingers being pressed down into the notes as if about to force a great weight out of the piano, the harshness will be avoided, and a full, deep singing tone will be the result.

Sometimes in a concerto with the orchestra the piano is left alone suddenly to usher in a grand and powerful phrase, the orchestra having just before been playing with immense tone and wealth of sound. This happens, for instance, at the end of the last movement of Grieg's pianoforte concerto (1). In such a place, unless the pianist can bring his tone up to something approximating to the volume and richness which the orchestra has just left off giving out, the phrase which he now has to bring in alone will miss its whole effect. His performance of it will give the impression of a poor, stilted, hard imitation of the orchestra, or, in fact, it will sound like the effort of a mouse trying to carry on the work of a lion. Yet to accomplish this tremendous balance of tone with a whole orchestra against him the pianist must be able to combine great strength with depth and sonority.

The grandiose cadenza of chords in the



(1) THE END OF THE LAST MOVEMENT OF GRIEG'S PIANOFORTE CONCERTO IN A MINOR.



(2) THE OPENING BARS OF LISZT'S PIANOFORTE CONCERTO IN E FLAT.

opening bars of Liszt's pianoforte concerto in E flat (2) is another instance where hardness of tone makes the whole passage unbearable, instead of, as it should be, if given with the right quality of sound, profound, and fraught with an atmosphere of impending excitement.

For if the pianist just comes down like a sledge-hammer upon the chords, as some do when endeavouring to obtain great power of tone, it only degenerates into mere noise, and can contain none of the epic quality with which a grand sequence of fortissimo chords should be invested. In pianissimo tone much the same sort of thing applies as regards the quality of it. If the tone produced is only a quiet sound, the result of a very gentle fall of the finger on the key and nothing more, what is there in it? It may be soft, but it will remain cold, impersonal, insipid, without any æsthetic value or significance. Therefore the pianist's business is to put warmth and tenderness into the softness, so that, though pianissimo, the sound clings and appeals to the ear.

Abrupt chords and outstanding notes at the end of a passage are also difficult to play with sufficient terseness without sacrificing beauty of tone; but here again concentration of the force of the blow given will rob it of the hard noise of the impact, without losing one jot of its energetic character.

One of the best developments of tone-production on the piano is to be able to strike the same note several times, and each time not only to make a crescendo or a diminuendo of the sound, but also to give an actual change in the character of the tone. In a decrescendo where the repeated note has to die away, it is most essential to get this change of tone-quality, as it is so true to nature. Every time a natural echo resounds again the tone loses a little more of its significance and the quality diminishes, and thus, too, must it be managed on the piano. It is a good deal owing to clever manipulation of the pedal

that such an effect can be produced, and also to a constant modification of the mode of attacking the note. Upon each occasion that the hand strikes the note it should approach closer and closer to the key, until at last the action becomes the merest pressure of the finger on the note to bring forth the final vague tone, that floats into nothing at the end of the echo.

The pianist who has attained a perfect development of tone-quality ought to be able to make a melody sound well on any piano, even the old cracked tin-kettle sort of variety one sometimes finds in country villages. This will be no doubt partly due to his high technical skill, but also because the artist who makes a great study of tone-colour comes to obtain a sort of intuition, after he has played on any instrument for a few moments, as to how he can obtain the best results from it, even when the means at his disposal are very limited. Therefore it is not always a disadvantage to the student to have only an indifferent instrument to practise on at home, for he is obliged to take far more pains to arrive at a fine tone-production on his poor piano. He will consequently learn more at the outset of the particular technic necessary for its achievement, and will possess a wider range of experience to apply when he reaches the possibility of more adequate means of expression.

The pedal, of course, is the greatest adjunct the pianist possesses to sweeten and enrich his tone, though it may equally well ruin its quality unless applied with much care and technical understanding. For if the pedal is carelessly used, and blurs and slurs over everything, nothing comes of it save a heavy atmosphere of unclean tone, like the over-charged air in a crowded and badly-ventilated room. This fault is almost worse than harshness or monotony. And it is monotonous in any case, just as much as tone that is unsweetened by the pedal, because the continual blur of this murky sound wearies the ear almost beyond endurance. But intelligent study of the effects of the pedal, and careful management in changing it when the basic harmonies of the music alter, can develop it into the most precious essential for imparting warmth and life to tone. Still, an initial dry and hard tone-production on the player's part cannot be entirely transformed or beautified by application of the pedal, however skilfully it is done. This is because the pianist's finger-attack is at the outset hard and direct in the actual striking of the keys, instead of being caressing, and there is nothing to be done until this fault is eradicated. So when practising it is a good thing to endeavour to produce a melting and sustained tone in melody without first applying the pedal at all; and the same should be done with chords. The pianist should learn to attack them with power and volume of sound, avoiding harsh blows, before evoking the pedal to come to his help. Then, when he is able to produce beauty of tone-quality unaided, he can study pedal effects with profit and enhancement to his playing.

Some people no doubt are endowed with a natural facility for producing a beautiful tone on the piano, generally owing to the particular construction of their hands, which are pliable, elastic, and sinuous by nature. But I think that, with sufficient careful study and attention given to the subject, every player can arrive at its acquirement, even though to some it seems a greater difficulty than to others.

Anyhow, it is one of the most necessary branches of pianoforte technic, and without possessing it the pianist will find it impossible to make charm or poetry of expression emanate from his instrument.

I can think of no more fitting conclusion to an article on beauty of tone than to refer to Anton Rubinstein's attitude towards this question. For that master of touch, who was undoubtedly the greatest exponent of "how to sing on the piano" who ever lived, used always to tell his pupils that he had acquired his knowledge from listening to the singing of the great tenor Rubini. He happened to hear Rubini sing one day, and was so impressed by the wonderful quality of his sound-production that ever afterwards his ideal remained to reproduce something of the tone of Rubini's voice upon his piano. Certainly, Rubinstein's idea that the sound of a beautiful human voice is the best inspiration for the pianist to imbibe is one which every student of tone-production would do well to follow.

The CASTAWAYS.

By

W. W. JACOBS.

Illustrated by Will Owen.

CHAPTER XVII.

MISS FLACK in a moment of enthusiasm said that the voyage was like a long railway journey, with delightful ports instead of stations. She averred that she had learnt more geography in a few months than in all the years spent at school; and only a week after leaving Auckland spoke warmly of the beautiful Sydney harbour at Melbourne.

In Polynesia she forsook geography for art, the beauty of Tahiti affecting her so strongly that she sought to express her emotions in verse. To the sympathetic Carstairs, who caught her in the act of tearing up paper and dropping the pieces overboard, she confessed that the subject was too great for her, and that she would have to rely upon memory and the inspiration of the moment when she wished to do justice to it. Her enthusiasm was shared by the others, and the *Starlight* by general request continued to cruise among the islands. Monarchs and their dusky followers were received on board, and Albert thrilled pleasantly when he saw the firearms provided for their entertainment in case of need.

"Not much chance of unpleasantness," explained Captain Vobster to Pope; "but, if there is any, my idea is always to be more unpleasant than the other fellow."

"Very good plan, too," said Pope, approvingly.

To Albert's secret disappointment, however, the skipper's precautions proved unnecessary. Good-fellowship and fair dealing were the order of the day, and the decks of the yacht were almost smothered at times in gifts. Fruit, vegetables, chickens, and pigs were supplied in abundance; the night Pope found five little pigs, decorated with pink ribbons, tied up in his bed being a memorable one in the annals of the voyage. The crowd that stood outside awaiting events fled in disorder at his appearance, and seeking sanctuary behind locked cabin doors earnestly assured him that it was not the animals' fault, and that nothing was farther from their wishes than to have him for a bed-fellow.

"Pope was quite crusty about it," said Knight, recounting the affair next day to Miss Seacombe. "He hasn't quite got over it yet."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourselves," said the girl.

"We are," said Knight. "But never mind about old Pope and his troubles. It is delightful to get you by yourself for five minutes. Quite like old times."

"I like company," said Miss Seacombe, thoughtfully.

"You've got what you like, then, on board this blessed ship," retorted Mr. Knight, with some heat.

"I suppose," said the girl, dreamily, "I suppose if Dr. Maloney were holding my hand the man on the bridge would think he was feeling my pulse."

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"Con-found the man on the bridge!" said Knight, dropping her hand hastily. "That's what I complain about; you can never get away from people here. How delightful it would be if we were the only two on board!"

"A bit dull," said Miss Seacombe.

"Dull!" exclaimed Knight, sharply. "*Dull!*"

"For you," said the girl, peaceably.

"Where's that brigand on the bridge got to?" inquired Knight, groping for her hand.

"Half in the wheel-house, but he will be out again in a minute or two. I expect he only went in there to laugh. It must seem rather funny to an onlooker."

"He had better not let me see him being funny," growled Knight.

"Poor thing," said Miss Seacombe, softly. "Diddums, then!"

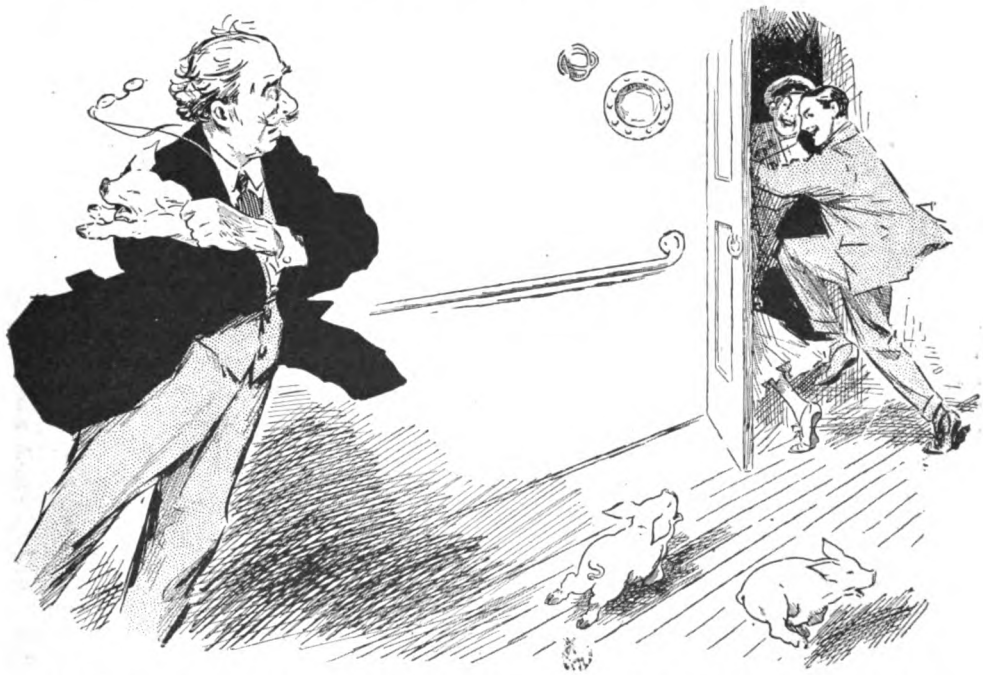
"And do try and be serious," said Knight, sternly. "What about running off and getting married? When we get ashore, I mean, of course," he added, as the girl waved towards the sea.

"No good," she said, seriously; "bread and cheese and—and—the usual concomitants are all very well in theory; in practice you would find the diet rather monotonous."

Knight sat considering. "I believe if we were once married and she couldn't help herself, Lady Penrose would come round," he said, slowly. "Wonder what it is she sees in me to object to?"

"It is strange, isn't it?" said the girl. "I think, for one thing, she has an idea that you are a slacker. She has got no patience with men who don't work, you know. Then I don't think she likes your manner much. Some people don't."

"What's it got to do with her?" demanded the indignant Knight. "You like it?"



"THE CROWD THAT STOOD OUTSIDE AWAITING EVENTS FLED IN DISORDER AT POPE'S APPEARANCE."

Miss Seacombe nodded. "It's your only charm," she murmured.

"Besides, I'm going to work," continued Knight. "I've been thinking a lot about it lately. Difficulty is to find something suitable. Can't you suggest something? I could drop it as soon as we were married."

He glanced hopefully at his companion, until it became evident that he had given her a problem which was in no immediate danger of being solved. After a long silence he came to her assistance.

"What about the stage?" he inquired.

"Or grand opera?" said the girl, demurely. "You only seem to think of the agreeable things, you know. You want to be paid for amusing yourself. As Isabel says——"

"I don't want to know what Isabel says," remarked Knight, grimly. "The whole fact of the matter is, she has got too much time on her hands. Why doesn't *she* work, if she's so fond of it? Or why doesn't she meet some tame, undiscriminating male and marry him? I'm sure that either Carstairs or Tollhurst——"

"She hates Captain Tollhurst," interrupted Miss Seacombe. "He simply haunts her, and when she is rude to him he seems to regard it as a delicate little attention on her part. He is so pleased with himself that nothing upsets him; he only smiles. It must be very nice to be like that."

"His devotion has not passed unnoticed," said Knight, dryly. "It has afforded me a great deal of innocent pleasure. In the hope that Lady Penrose will imitate my delicacy I always avoid intruding upon them when possible. I am sure she has noticed it."

"It's the sort of thing you would do," said the girl, restlessly, "and then you wonder why Isabel objects to you."

Mr. Knight started, and admitting, after due consideration, that perhaps his behaviour could be improved, set himself to the task with such characteristic energy that his friends were somewhat perturbed in consequence. One or two of them attributed the change to failing health, others (the majority) suspected mischief, Pope on two occasions getting up from the meal-table to make sure that his cabin door was locked.

A series of violent squalls and rainstorms helped to relieve the monotony of life at sea, and a fresh interest was imparted by the knowledge that Captain Vobster was understood to be making for an uninhabited island.

"Uninhabited when last visited," he said, guardedly.

Visions of a picnic on a scale hitherto undreamt of took possession of all on board. The sailmaker was set to work to make a couple of tents; and the form of picnic to be enjoyed became the subject of a somewhat heated debate. The company was almost equally divided into "Thermos Flasks" and "Robinson Crusoes," the former voting for comfort and the latter—consisting chiefly of the younger members—preferring to gather their sustenance at first hand from the land and the sea and sleep in houses of their own erecting. In the final division it had to be pointed out to Mr. Peplow, torn between love and self-interest, that he could not vote on both sides.

"It really ought to be a delightful experience," said Lady Penrose, as she sat one morning discussing the subject with Carstairs. "There is something very delightful in the idea of getting back to Nature."

Carstairs coughed. "With the resources of civilization at hand, yes," he replied. "Anyway, I expect we shall all be glad of a run ashore. I'm afraid you find things a little bit dull sometimes on board ship."

His companion shook her head. "No," she said, slowly; "but a little more excitement perhaps would not come amiss. Nothing seems to happen at sea; no post, no newspapers, no scandal."

"H'm! We might have managed that," said Carstairs, in tones of self-reproach. "I'll speak to Pope about it. I believe the whole fact of the matter is you are still suffering from a most unfeminine thirst for adventure. Suppose we go up to the Solomons; the skipper has got some gruesome stories about them."

"Adventure without risk," said Lady Penrose, firmly. "I have got no use for the other kind. The sea-stories I used to read in my youth were full of incident; in real life nothing seems to happen. As a matter of fact, I don't really want an adventure for myself; I want one for Captain Tollhurst."

"Altruist," murmured Carstairs.

"Anything but that," said Lady Penrose; "but if I have to listen to any more of his deeds of derring do I shall address the crew, storm the saloon, and put him in irons."

"Mutiny!" said Carstairs, with a smile.

"Call it what you like," was the reply, "but it does seem hard that with a hero like that on board there should be no opportunity for a display of his powers. It isn't fair to him, you know."

Carstairs smiled again, and Lady Penrose, with a side glance at him, clasped her hands and sat thinking. She took another glance at him and their eyes met. Hers were soft and seemed unusually large. He observed them with interest.

"I was going to ask a favour of you," she said, at last, with a little laugh, "but you have been so kind that I won't. It's presuming on good nature."

"Please," said Carstairs, earnestly.

His companion shook her head with an imitation of determination that he mistook for the real thing. He became insistent.

"You wouldn't agree," she said, at last, after many arguments.

"Anything that is possible," said Carstairs, with emphasis.

"It is such a great favour," she murmured, "and I ought not to ask it."

"The bigger the better," said Carstairs, stoutly. "Now, what is it?"

Lady Penrose hesitated and looked away. "Better leave it alone," she said, turning to him again, with a smile. "Why do you tempt me?"

"What is it?" he repeated.

"Do you pass your word to grant it?" she inquired.

"Certainly, provided it is nothing impossible," said Carstairs.

"Oh, how good you are!" she said, with a disturbing smile. "Mind, you have passed your word!"

Carstairs, vaguely uneasy, nodded. "I am quite sure that Lady Penrose would ask nothing that—that——" he began.

Lady Penrose laughed. "Oh, ho, wouldn't she?" she retorted. "That's why she got your promise first. You know, if there's one thing I feel certain of about you it is that you would never in any circumstances break your word. I am sure that you would go to the stake first. However unpleasant——"

"Suppose we stop this unwholesome flattery and get to business," interrupted the paragon.

Lady Penrose nodded. "Very well," she said, briskly. "I want the head of Captain Tollhurst on a charger."

"Oh!" said Carstairs, relieved. "Oh, is that all? What a fuss to make about a little thing like that! I have no doubt Tollhurst will be delighted."

"His feelings don't matter. Now, you have passed your word, you know; there is no escape for you. I want—a mutiny."

"What, as well as Tollhurst's head?" inquired her astonished host.

"Same thing," said Lady Penrose. "Captain Tollhurst will lose his head when it happens and the thing is done. He will never hold it up again."

Carstairs became grave. "You are not serious," he protested.

"Never more so in my life," said Lady Penrose, cheerfully.

"I know better," said Carstairs, stoutly. "You are far too kind and good-natured and thoughtful for others, and——"

"'Suppose we stop this unwholesome flattery and get to business,'" quoted the other, smiling.

"And you mustn't forget that Tollhurst is my guest," concluded Carstairs, gravely.

"And you mustn't forget that you promised me," said Lady Penrose. "Oh, I can see myself clinging to his arm and begging him to save me. Like this, you know!"

She clung lightly to Carstairs' arm and gazed at him appealingly.

"Well, he would if you looked at him like that," he said, with a laugh, as she released his arm. "He couldn't help himself. And suppose he takes the thing seriously and kills somebody? Besides, think how frightened the ladies would be. It is impossible."

"I will arrange for the ladies," said Lady Penrose, dryly.

"It isn't fair to Tollhurst," said Carstairs, shaking his head obstinately. "It can't be done."

"Why not? It gives him the opportunity of his life. Think what a magnificent chance it gives him of displaying his courage. You don't doubt his valour, do you?"

"Your duplicity," said Carstairs, mournfully, "is shocking."

"And I'm sure the sailors will enjoy it. Poor fellows; their lives are very grey, Mr. Carstairs, very grey."

"Nothing to what mine would be," said Carstairs. "You won't hold me to my promise, Lady Penrose?"

"I certainly shall," she answered. "And here comes Captain Vobster," she added, as the burly figure of the skipper came down from the bridge. "Oh, captain!"

"Ma'am," said the skipper, pausing, and raising his cap.

"Mr. Carstairs has got a little request to make. He was waiting to speak to you about it."

"Yes, sir?" said Vobster, looking from one to the other.

Carstairs shifted in his seat. "Lady Penrose finds life at sea rather dull, captain," he said, after an awkward pause, "and she was suggesting a little excitement which I feel sure you would not care to permit."

"Mr. Carstairs, that's not fair," said Lady Penrose, sharply.

Captain Vobster gazed at her with admiration. "Anything that *I* can do to oblige Lady Penrose, sir——" he began.

Lady Penrose returned his glance of admiration with interest. "Thank you, Captain Vobster," she said, warmly. "I felt sure of *your* support."

There was another long pause, broken at last by Carstairs. "Lady Penrose was wondering whether you could provide a little—er—er—amusement," he said, desperately.

"Amusement!" repeated the skipper, and, tilting his cap, scratched his head as an aid to thought.

"We want the crew to amuse us, captain," explained Lady Penrose.

The skipper's face cleared and his cap settled back into its place. "Crew," he said, meditatively. "Lemme see. There's one of 'em plays the concertina, I know, because I've stopped him at it half-a-dozen times. And there's one of 'em can walk on his hands surprising well. Mr. Pope met him doing it night before last, and it gave him quite a shock."

Carstairs sighed. "Ah, I'm afraid Lady Penrose wouldn't be satisfied with simple, healthy amusements of that kind; she wants something more elaborate. This conversation is quite private, captain?"

"Certainly, sir," said that mystified mariner.

"Well, she—er—wants you to—to arrange a mutiny."

"As soon as possible," added the smiling Lady Penrose, "before it leaks out. To-morrow would do."

"A mutiny!" ejaculated the startled Vobster. "A mutiny! What, aboard of my ship?"

"Only an imitation one, you know," said Carstairs. "Just pretending."

"A little play, really," explained Lady Penrose, hastily. "Like a charade, you know, or Dumbo Crambo. The crew seizing the passengers—only the men, of course—and holding the officers down."

"Hold——" repeated the skipper, in a strangulated voice. "Hold—*holding* the—I think I see 'em doing it. I think I see 'em—I—I——"

His face turned a deep purple and the veins in his neck swelled. Past speech, he took a turn up and down, gobbling helplessly. Lady Penrose sat regarding him with gentle interest.

"It is only fun, Captain Vobster," she said, softly; "and the men would enjoy it so. They don't have much amusement, poor things. Their lives are very grey."

The skipper pulled up short and stood eyeing her. "And they'd be black and blue, too, before I'd done with them, if they laid hands on me," he growled.

"Then you refuse to give your consent, captain?" said Carstairs, with great cheerfulness.

"With all respect to you, sir, most certainly," said Vobster, still breathing hard. "I've been asked to do a good many things in my life, but I've never been asked before to let a pack of idle, good-for-nothing fo'c'sle sweepings hold me down. Never!"

"I'm so sorry," said Carstairs, turning to Lady Penrose, with an air of gentle regret, "but you see how it is, don't you? I was afraid all along that Captain Vobster wouldn't. You see, there is such a strong idea of discipline rooted in——"

"Yes, I know," said Lady Penrose, impatiently, "but it's a great disappointment to me. Please leave me to myself for a minute or two; I want to think."

"I'm awfully sorry," said Carstairs, rising. "Come along, captain."

"I want him," said Lady Penrose, calmly, as the relieved skipper turned to obey.

Carstairs started, and meeting the skipper's eye gave him a glance full of warning; Vobster, in return, favoured him with something as near a wink as his sense of discipline would allow.

"Come and sit here," said Lady Penrose, with a gracious smile, as Carstairs walked off. "I want to talk to you."

Captain Vobster looked around helplessly and, accepting the inevitable, planted himself in the chair. A graven image would have looked more amenable to reason. Bolt upright, with his clenched fists on his knees, he sat ready to refuse all overtures.

"Have you ever set your heart upon having anything?" she inquired, in a small, timid voice.

"Very often," was the reply.

"Ah, you can sympathize with me, then," remarked Lady Penrose, gently.

"And, generally speaking," said Captain Vobster, nodding to himself with great satisfaction, "it turned out fortunate for me that I didn't get it."

"How nice!" she murmured, with a vindictive glance. "But when you were engaged, Captain Vobster, and your *fiancée* asked you for anything——"

"She didn't," interrupted the skipper, freshly.

"No?"

"No; she waited until we were married. Then," continued Captain Vobster, his face darkening, "she made up for it."

"It comes to the same thing," said Lady Penrose, hopefully.

"Yes—she didn't get it," said Vobster, with a chuckle.

Lady Penrose laughed, and the skipper, relaxing, took up a more comfortable position.

"It is no good for anybody to try and get the better of you, Captain Vobster," she said, in admiring accents. "You have too much strength of mind. Do you know that in manner and appearance you remind me very much of Lord Merton?"

The astonished Vobster put his cap straight. "Indeed!" he murmured.

"The likeness is extraordinary; even your voices are alike. When we get back I must introduce you; then you can see for yourself. You will come and see me, won't you?"

"I shall be delighted," was the reply.

"And then I shall be able to ask Mrs. Vobster about those things she didn't get."

The skipper shifted a little in his seat. "Oh, she'd be sure to tell you she got 'em," he said, uneasily. "You see—she—she has got a sort of idea rooted in her head that she gets her own way. 'Course, I need hardly say——"

"Of course," agreed his listener, "anybody could see that."

"It pleases her, and it don't hurt me, if you understand."

"Perfectly," said Lady Penrose. "Now, Captain Vobster, as a special favour to me, won't you oblige by helping us in our little play? It is only just private theatricals, and we can't do it without your consent. On board ship the captain is, of course, master. His word is law."

The unhappy skipper looked about him helplessly. "I never heard of such a thing before," he said, awkwardly. "Never."

"Neither have I," said the temptress, frankly; "and, of course, with most captains I shouldn't have dreamt of such a thing. With an ordinary captain, destitute of any sense of humour, it would be impossible. Really—to tell you a secret—it was observing the command you have over your men that made me think of it first, I believe. That and your likeness to Lord Merton. *He* would have jumped at it. Shall we walk?"

She rose and, placing her hand on the skipper's arm, paced slowly up and down. Her face expressed gentle resignation.

"You see, it's the sailormen," said the perturbed Vobster, after half-a-dozen turns.

Lady Penrose nodded. "Of course; but I know you well enough to know that you would have them thoroughly in hand all the time."

"And it would look so bad for me," continued the skipper. "What should I be supposed to be doing while those lazy rascals of mine were mutinying?"

"That would be all right," she said, softly. "I thought of you first."

Vobster smiled. "Thank you," he said, gratefully, "but I don't see——"

"Six of the biggest and most powerful men in the ship must seize you suddenly from behind and gag and bind you."

"Bind!" spluttered the skipper, dropping her arm and springing back. "Bind! Gag! Bind and gag *me?* What, sailormen? ME!"

"And Mr. Carstairs and Sir Edward Talwyn and the others," said Lady Penrose, in a coaxing voice. "You won't be alone. Sir Edward is one of the oldest baronets in the kingdom, and he'll enjoy it. I am sure of it. Now, Captain Vobster, you will, won't you?"

She took his arm again without any assistance from him and gazed at him in mute appeal. He cleared his throat.

"I don't like to be a spoil-sport," he began, firmly, "but when——"

"And you won't," she interrupted, with conviction. "I am sure you won't. After all, it's only acting. Why, I've seen a prince play the part of a servant-girl, in a dirty cap and apron with his nose smutted. Now, I'm not suggesting anything so undignified for you."

"Not gagging?" demanded the skipper, thickly.

"Nothing like so bad. Of course, the men will only pretend to bind you," said Lady Penrose, looking up as Pope and Carstairs came towards them. "Oh, Mr. Carstairs, Captain Vobster, in the noblest fashion, has consented."

"EH?" said Carstairs and Vobster, in tones of blank amazement.

"He is a born actor," continued Lady Penrose. "He saw all sorts of possibilities in the part. He is going to be bound and gagged. Pretend to be, I mean."

"I—I——" began the indignant skipper. "I—I'm afraid——"

"Now, Captain Vobster," said Lady Penrose, with conviction, "I am quite sure that nothing could make you afraid."

"Bound and gagged?" repeated Pope, open-eyed. "What's he done?"

"*H'sh!* Nothing," said Lady Penrose, with a radiant smile at the fermenting Vobster. "Nothing, except to refuse to say 'No' to a lady."

"Well, nobody expected him to do that," said the mystified Pope.

Captain Vobster looked about him with the helpless gaze of a trapped animal. "Very well," he said, thickly. "Very well; but I must have instructions from you before witnesses, sir. I won't do it without. And I'll have 'em in writing."

"Better do it now," said the triumphant Lady Penrose before Carstairs could speak. "Come along, Mr. Pope. Now, Mr. Carstairs."

are from Mr. Pope and the skipper, and they preferred him to get them in a roundabout way. Tell him that it's Carstairs' wish, but nobody wants to appear responsible for it."

"Aye, aye!" said Biggs, with a confident nod. "Tarn won't give any trouble. He's a stiff chap, but he's got the brain of a five-year-old. He'll believe anything *I* tell him. And if I could tell the hands that there was a fiver for them if things go off properly——"

"Of course," said Knight. "And, by the way, you had better not be one of the mutineers."

"Course not, sir," replied Biggs, in an injured voice. "I'm one of the after-guard. I've already arranged with the chap that's to knock me out. Showed him just where to pretend to hit me. And told him to remember that it *is* pretending."

He helped himself to a whisky and soda by request and went off.

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"I'll get a few dressings ready," said Maloney. "When is this affair supposed to start?"

"When we get to the island. Vobster expects to make it to-morrow. He prefers it to happen with the ship laid to. Pope says he is like a particularly nasty bear with a particularly nasty sore head. Can't get anything out of him except grunts."

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"I hope so," said Mrs. Ginnell. "I am longing to get ashore."

"So interesting to see the dear sailors trying to act," murmured Miss Flack. "I thought Mr. Carstairs was looking rather worried this morning; perhaps it will cheer him up. But why weren't we allowed to tell the men?"

Mrs. Ginnell shook her head. "Don't know, I'm sure," she replied, with a puzzled air. "Mr. Pope said it was part of the play."

The voice of Captain Vobster was heard again from the bridge in a series of angry barks.

"The captain seems rather cross about something," said Lady Penrose, turning to Carstairs, with a smile. "I am feeling so excited."

"I am ashamed of myself," said Carstairs, gravely. "It's a sorry trick for a man to play on a guest."

"Guest?" said Lady Penrose. "I don't understand you."

"Tollhurst," said Carstairs, raising his eyebrows.

Lady Penrose laughed. "Why should you think so particularly of Captain Tollhurst?" she inquired. "It's the same for him as the others. Suppose that Sir Edward or Mr. Knight or any of them behave badly?"

"By Jove!" said the other, aghast. "I never thought of that. I may make several enemies instead of one; I shall not have a friend left. You will have to be very good to me."

"I will—if your fears are justified," she said, with a smile.

"Tiny little place," said Tollhurst, lounging up and gazing at the island. "However, it'll be a change after the ship."

"I hope it *is* uninhabited," said Lady Penrose.

"Plenty of us to look after you if it is not," returned Tollhurst, with a smile; "but Talwyn and I have been inspecting it with our glasses, and I don't think there is any doubt. Knight has been examining it, too. He seemed quite anxious about it. You're not looking very well, Carstairs! Feel all right?"

"Quite," replied Carstairs, who had been nervously glancing along the deck. "Ready for anything," he added, desperately, as he met Lady Penrose's gaze.

He looked idly at Mr. Biggs, who had come up from the engine-room and was standing on the top of the ladder drinking in big draughts of fresh air. With a final gulp Biggs disappeared, and a minute later a couple of firemen, grasping iron bars and grinning sheepishly, came up the ladder and went forward. A seaman passed.

"What's that chap doing with a pistol?" exclaimed Tollhurst, gazing after him.

Carstairs swallowed, and shook his head as

the end off a cigar and placing it in his mouth while he fumbled in his pocket for matches, "they'll blame me. Everybody will; Lady Penrose said so. Carstairs has given me full powers; he has left all the details to me."

Knight made a sympathetic noise and waited. To pass the time he took a cigar, and let it out two minutes later in his interest at Pope's revelations.

"And I'm only telling you," concluded the latter, "because I thought that if you took it seriously things might go a bit too far. It would be a serious thing if you broke anybody's head."

"It would," said Knight, grimly; "and more serious still if they broke mine. I'm going to tell Maloney; his temper is not exactly lamb-like. And what about the ladies? They'll be scared to death."

"I am to prepare them," replied Pope. "I've got to do everything, it seems to me. Lady Penrose doesn't want to appear in it, and Carstairs says he washes his hands of it. I've had no end of difficulty in trying to explain to the bo'sun what he has got to do. He is to be the ringleader."

"They couldn't have left it in more capable hands," said Knight, warmly. "They have avoided disaster by relying on your common sense. And Vobster has got written instructions?"

Pope nodded, and Knight, relighting his cigar, paused to pay a few more well-turned compliments, and withdrew. In the solitude of his own cabin he sat for some time considering ways and means of turning the information he had received to his own advantage. He had an idea that it would be an odd thing if he could not fish to some purpose in such troubled waters as a mutiny, and Maloney, whose cabin he invaded after dinner, felt disposed to agree with him. In low tones they discussed the situation.

"It's a bit hard on Tollhurst," said Knight, slowly.

"We might give him the tip," suggested the doctor.

Knight shook his head. "I've got a better plan," he said, "if I could only get it carried out."

He bent to the doctor's ear, and whispered.

"*Eh?*" said the other, starting back. "Nonsense. It's impossible!"

"We'll see," said Knight. "With your assistance and——"

"You can count me out," interrupted the doctor, coldly. "I'm not very particular, but Carstairs happens, for the time being, to be my employer."

"It would be doing him a good turn," said Knight, eagerly.

"Also, there is a lady in the case," continued the other.

"Of course there is," retorted Knight, "I've just been telling you. It's her scheme, and there's no reason why she should object to having it touched up a little bit here and there. That's all I propose to do."

The doctor laughed and stretched himself. "How are you going to manage it?" he inquired.

"I'm going to enlist the services of Biggs. I've left word for him to come round to my cabin at ten to-night. You can come, too, if you like. I'm disappointed in you—— I thought you'd have jumped at the idea. Anyway, I know you'll keep quiet. Pity you haven't got more spirit."

Maloney shifted. "That'll do," he said, curtly. "And I don't think Biggs'll be much use to you."

Knight nodded. "He'll be all right," he said, confidently. "He's very popular with the crew owing to his democratic notions. Moreover, he is at the present moment suffering badly from unrequited affection. Mudge has bestowed her hand and heart upon Markham, and I fancy that Biggs is in the mood at present for any mischief that turns up."

The doctor rose. "There'll be a little surgical work for me if you are not careful," he remarked. "Mind, I'm not going to assist; I shall content myself with holding a watching brief."

"I knew you were all right," said Knight, with a grin. "Come along at ten to-night and see me handle Biggs."

As a matter of fact, very little handling was required. Mr. Biggs evinced no surprise at the recital, and, so far from objecting to Knight's improvements, came forward with some really good suggestions.

"That'll be all right, sir," he said, delicately puffing at a cigar Knight had given him. "The bo'sun has already told the crew what is to be done, and it'll be quite easy to make a few alterations. I was one of the first he told, him wanting my assistance. I've been teaching 'em how to howl this afternoon, down in the fo'c'sle. Surprising how slow they are at learning. They seemed to think they were a Sunday-school choir at first."

"Excellent," said Knight. "But you'll have to be careful with the bo'sun. Give him to understand that the new instructions

are from Mr. Pope and the skipper, and they preferred him to get them in a roundabout way. Tell him that it's Carstairs' wish, but nobody wants to appear responsible for it."

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Carstairs swallowed, and shook his head as

"A COUPLE OF HANDS SEIZED LADY PENROSE. 'HOW DARE YOU?' SHE DEMANDED, WRATHFULLY."

a low, threatening murmur was heard forward. It died away as Captain Vobster began to speak, and then broke out again in increased volume.

"What's the matter?" inquired Peplow, coming up.

"Seems to be a little argument," replied Tollhurst. "Looks like trouble," he added, as an extraordinary storm of hoots and groans broke out.

"Get back to your work," bellowed Vobster. "The first man that moves——"

A couple of pistol-shots rang out, and his voice was drowned in a prolonged and ferocious roar. The ladies, partly amused and partly scared, clustered round Carstairs.

"What on earth's happening?" shouted Knight. "By Jove! they've got the mate down. Well done, Vobster! Well done!"

"He's down, too," said Effie Blake, clasping her hands. "Oh!"

The burly form of the skipper disappeared in the press. Lady Penrose gave a faint scream. "Captain Tollhurst, save us!" she implored, as a body of seamen, waving pistols and clubs, came surging towards them. "Save us!"

"Save us!" echoed the Misses Blake and Seacombe.

"*Extraordinary!*" murmured the amazed captain.

He sprang forward, and with a heavy blow knocked the leading man off his feet, and snatching a pistol from the hand of the next gave him a smart rap over the head with it. The next moment he was down and lost to view in a squirming mass of legs and arms. A seaman, extricating himself from the scrum, paid a profane but heartfelt compliment to the captain's teeth.

The whole thing was so rapid that for a few moments nobody moved. Then Peplow, moving forward, fell headlong over the foot of the watchful doctor. Biggs, dashing up from the engine-room, received a blow on the head as per arrangement and subsided; Talwyn was held back by Knight.

"No use," said the latter, in a hurried whisper. "Keep quiet and bide your time."

He caught his breath as Tarn, having finished with the skipper, came rushing aft. The boatswain was transfigured. His eyes were blazing and his face was contorted. A faint scream from Miss Flack paid tribute to his appearance.

"Now, my lads!" he bawled. "Smartly with it. Into the boat with him; we don't want no owners aboard."

Before the astounded Carstairs could move he was seized by willing hands and forced to the side.

"Here! What the devil are you doing?" he gasped.

"Shove him in the boat and put him ashore," roared the boatswain. "Lively with it now. And you can put this lady in to keep him company."

"Stop, you fools!" shouted Carstairs, struggling violently, as a couple of hands seized Lady Penrose and bore her after him.

"How dare you?" she demanded, wrathfully, as they moved towards the boat. Her gaze fell on Captain Vobster, who, with a dirty cloth over his mouth and trussed like a fowl, was sitting with his back against the smoke-room. "Captain Vobster!" she cried. "Why don't you stop them? Stop them at once!"

"In with them," cried Tarn, levelling a pistol at the little knot of amazed passengers. "If any man moves I'll shoot him."

He stood until the couple were placed in the boat, and then, putting the pistol in his pocket, stepped forward and, seizing Miss Mudge, raised her in his arms. Miss Mudge, buffeting his face with one hand, seized a handful of hair with the other.

"Easy, my dear," cried the boatswain, his eyes watering. "'Ere, not quite so much of it. Lor' lumme, I wish I was coming with you!"

He relinquished her with relief. The boat was lowered and pulled rapidly towards the shore. Tarn, wiping his brow, stood considering.

"Take the others below while I make up my mind what to do with them," he said, at last.

He walked to the side and stood for some time watching the receding boat. Then he turned, and bending down with his hands on his knees gazed respectfully at the protruding eyes and purple cheeks of the trussed Vobster.

"I 'ope I done it as you wished, sir?" he said, with an uneasy wriggle. "No bloodshed, and everybody 'appy and comfortable."

(To be continued.)

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 15.

THIS of that is often made;
Exaggeration, we're afraid.

1. Though ordinary, ghosts obey.
2. Upon the trees he used to write.
3. We grant it's not a common sight.
4. The clothes are taken right away.
5. 'Tis difficult, but such folk laugh.
6. A spirit—Bulwer Lytton brand.
7. G. will, of course, stand for Giraffe.
8. A unicorn, but cannot stand.

SOKO.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 16.

Iguanas, platypi,
Tigers, hippopotami,
Sharks and cuttles, lobsters, crabs,
Herrings, conger-eels, and dabs,
Wagtails, ostriches, and owls,
Robins, eagles, barnyard fowls,
Study their respective ways—
Each one certain laws obeys.

1. Less than nothing; if increased,
   Somebody would have a feast.
2. Hero's father here we see.
   (Think of city, fish, and tree.)
3. Hither they are often made.
   Homage to the saint is paid.
4. North or South, whiche'er you please,
   Island of the Hebrides.
5. Soldier's food would be excess.
   Reason asks for rather less.
6. Famous beast that brings to mind
   Quadruped of other kind.
7. Four arms for a moment weigh:
   Something else occurred that day. PAX.

ANSWER TO No. 13.

1.	S	e	A
2.	U	r s	U
3.	M	i g h	T
4.	M	o r c e a	U
5.	E	p s o	M
6.	R	o u c	N

NOTE.—Light 2. Ursus.

ANSWER TO No. 14.

1.	B	r e a t	H
2.	R	o t u n d	A
3.	I		S
4.	G	o u	T
5.	H		I
6.	T	r e a s o	G
7.	O		N
8.	N	o	S

NOTES.—Light 3. Isis, Oxford. 7. Deuteronomy iii. 11. Light 8. Latin, *nos, we.*

Answers to Acrostics 15 and 16 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C., and must arrive not later than by the first post on October 6th.*

Two answers may be sent to every light.

The two solutions must be written on different pieces of paper, and each must be signed with the solver's pseudonym.

"Scald-crow" and "Creshawk" are accepted for the first light of No. 12, and "Labiodental" for the fourth light.

RESULT OF THE SECOND SERIES.

The maximum number of points obtainable during the quarter was 34. This number was gained by Cobweb, Cyno, Geomat, Kamsin, and Lobo, each of whom wins a prize of £2, and will be ineligible for a prize in the third series, now running. Reg missed one point only, and will receive a prize of 10s. Every other competitor missed three or more lights during the quarter.

The names and addresses of these six winners are: Cobweb, Mr. C. W. Cooper, 131, Trinity Road, Upper Tooting, S.W.; Cyno, Mr. C. Norman, 28, Dukes Avenue, New Malden, Surrey; Geomat, Mr. G. E. Matthews, 53, Stockwell Green, S.W.; Kamsin, Mr. W. G. Cool, 105, Glenaldon Road, Streatham, S.W.; Lobo, Mr. L. Morris, 74, Larch Road, Cricklewood, N.W.; Reg, Mr. H. Lees, 3, Campden House Chambers, W.

The BRITISH CAMPAIGN IN FRANCE.

THE FACTS AT LAST!

The Inside Story of the War.

By

A. CONAN DOYLE.

CHAPTER VI.—*(Continued.)*

THE FIRST BATTLE OF YPRES.

(Up to the Action of Gheluvelt, October 31.)

Desperate Attacks on Seventh Division—Destruction of 2nd Wilts—Hard Fight of Twentieth Brigade—Arrival of First Corps—Advance of Haig's Corps—Fight of Pilken Inn—Bravery of Enemy—Advance of Second Division—Fight of Kruisiek Cross-Roads—Fight of Zandvoorde—Fight of Gheluvelt—Advance of Worcesters—German Recoil—General Result—A Great Crisis.

ON October 21st the enemy got a true conception of the salient in front of the Seventh Division, and opened a vigorous attack, which lasted all day and assumed several different phases at different points. The feature of the morning of the 21st was the severe and, indeed, disastrous artillery fire upon Lawford's Twenty-second Brigade. The exact range of the British position seems to have been discovered with deadly results. Men, trenches, and machine-guns were all blown to pieces together. The 2nd Warwicks and the 1st Welsh Fusiliers were the two regiments upon which the storm beat hardest, and each of them had some hundred of casualties. In three days the Welsh Fusiliers, who were on the exposed left flank, lost three-quarters of their effectives, including twenty-three of their officers, and yet preserved their military spirit. It became clearer as experience accumulated that the best trenches, if they are once fairly located, can be made untenable or turned into the graves of their occupants by the use of high explosives. The German fire was so severe that it was reckoned that one hundred and twenty shells an hour into or round a trench was a not uncommon rate of fall. The 2nd Queen's Surrey also lost seven officers and many men in this day's fighting.

DESPERATE ATTACKS ON SEVENTH DIVISION.

In the afternoon of October 21st a strong attack was made upon the Twenty-first Brigade in the centre of the line. The brigade was holding a front of two and a

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half miles, and, although the attack was generally beaten back, a certain number of stormers got through between the trenches and into the woods beyond. Here they lurked for a couple of days, during which time the 2nd Yorkshire Regiment, behind whose line they were lying, were often compelled to have each alternate man facing a different way to keep down the fire. The regiment sent itself reinforcements by hurrying its right company over to help to clear its left. This movement was successful, but was attended with heavy losses, including several officers. Some of the Royal Scots Fusiliers had been forced out of their trenches on the right, and made a gallant attempt to re-establish them, in which Captain Fairlie and many men were lost. The Wiltshires also endured a very severe attack, which they repulsed with great loss to the enemy. On this same eventful day, the 21st, the Second Cavalry Division had been pushed back at Holbeke, and the Germans got round the right flank of the hard-pressed infantry. It was then that General Rawlinson brought his Third Cavalry Division round and established it upon his right instead of his left flank. From this time until October 30th this cavalry division was holding Zandvoorde Ridge, sharing day by day in all the perils and the glories of their comrades of the Seventh Division. There was no more dangerous point than that which was held by the cavalry, and their losses, especially those of the 10th Hussars, were in proportion to the danger.

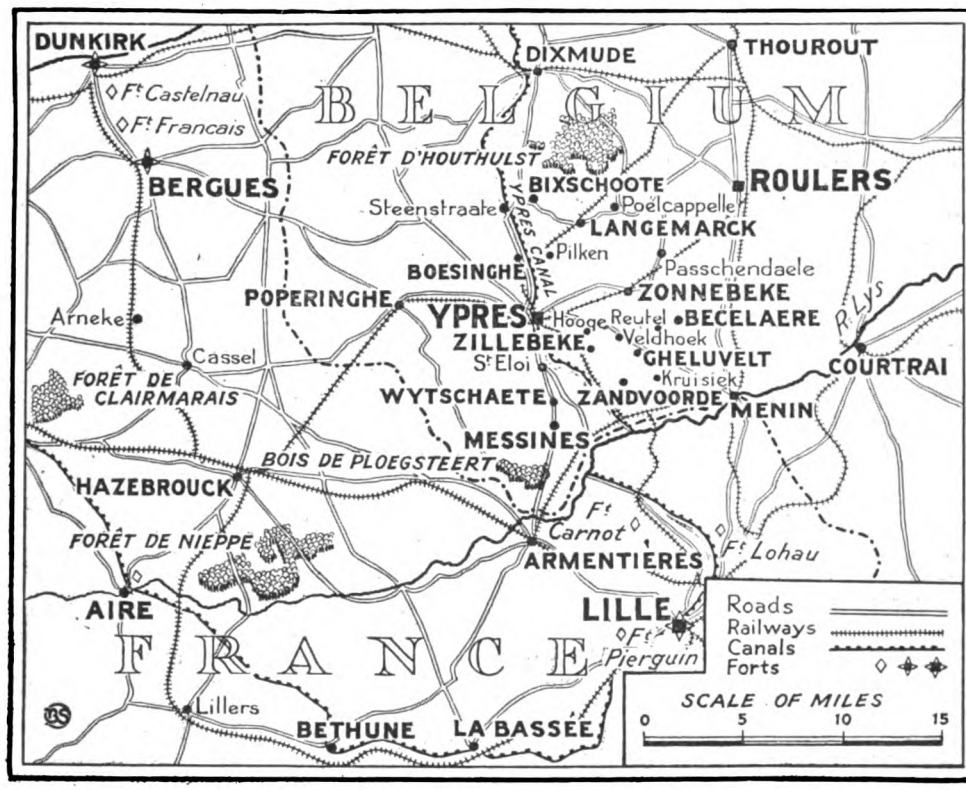
On October 22nd the Second Division of Haig's First Corps, which had been fully occupied to the north with operations which will presently be described, moved down to cover the ground vacated by the Third Cavalry Division and to relieve the pressure upon the infantry of the Seventh Division. It was time. For four days they had covered the enormous front of eight miles against at least four times their own number, with more than six times their weight of artillery. It was touch and go. They were nearly submerged. It was indeed a vision of joy when, looking over their shoulders down the Ypres-Menin road, they saw the head of a British column coming swiftly to the rescue. It was the 2nd Highland Light Infantry and the 2nd Worcesters, dispatched from the Fifth Brigade, and never was reinforcement more needed. Shortly afterwards further help in the shape of a detachment of the Munster Fusiliers, two troops of Irish Horse, and one section of artillery appeared upon the scene.

DESTRUCTION OF 2nd WILTS.

Upon this date (October 22nd) the Twenty-second Infantry Brigade of the Seventh Division had fallen back to the railway crossings near Zonnebeke. Thus the salient which the Germans had been attacking was straightened out. Unhappily, the change caused another smaller salient farther south at the point which was held by the 2nd Wiltshires. On the 22nd and 23rd there was a tremendous shelling of this sector, which was followed on the 24th by an infantry advance, in which the Wiltshires, who had been previously much reduced, were utterly overwhelmed and practically destroyed. The disastrous attack broke upon the British line just after daybreak. The enemy pushed through behind each flank of the Wiltshires, elbowing off the Scots Fusiliers on one side and the Scots Guards on the other. The Germans got in force into the Polygon Woods behind. There were no reserves available save the Northumberland Hussars, a corps which has the honour of being the first British Territorial corps to fight for its country. With the aid of some divisional cyclists, this handful of men held back the Germans until the 2nd Warwicks from the north were brought to stem the advance. The Warwicks charged through the wood, their gallant Colonel Loring riding his horse beside them without boot or legging, having been wounded some days before. "Where my men go I go as well," was his answer to medical remonstrance. He was killed by a bullet, but he died at a moment of victory, for his last earthly vision was that of his infantry driving the last Germans out of the wood. Besides their colonel, the regiment lost many officers and men in this fine advance, which was most vigorously supported by the 2nd Worcesters, the only reinforcement within reach. The Worcesters lost six officers and one hundred and sixty men, but did much execution and took a number of prisoners.

HARD FIGHT OF TWENTIETH BRIGADE.

At this time the Twentieth Brigade, being the extreme right of the Seventh Division, held an extended line from Kruisiek cross-roads, about a mile east of Gheluvelt village, to near Zandvoorde, with a salient at the village of Kruisiek. On the night of the 25th the Germans planned a furious attack upon the whole salient. The assailants, who were mostly Saxons, broke through the 2nd Scots Guards just north of Kruisiek and got behind the line, which was pushed back for some



THE SCENE OF THE FIGHTING DESCRIBED IN THE PRESENT INSTALMENT.

distance, though Captain Paynter, with the right-hand company, held his position. A counter-attack by the Guards retook the line, together with two hundred prisoners, including seven officers. On the morning of the 26th the Germans were back on them, however, and began by blowing in the trenches of the Border Regiment south of Kruisiek. The German guns had found the exact range of the trenches, and the defenders had the same terrible and intolerable experience which had befallen some of their comrades two days before. It was simply impossible to stand up against the incessant shower of shattering shells. So great was the concussion and the nervous strain that many of the men exposed to it got completely dazed or even became delirious. Grenadiers, Scots Guards, and South Staffords, of the Twentieth Brigade, held the line until the front trenches were carried by the Germans and many of the occupants made prisoners. It was pitch-dark, and it was impossible to tell friend from foe. It was on this occasion that Lord Dalrymple, Colonel Bolton, and other officers, with some hundreds of men, fell into the hands of the enemy after a most heroic resistance to overpowering numbers and to a weight of artillery which was crushing in its effect. The King's Company of the 1st Grenadiers was isolated and in great danger, but managed to link up with the British line. The 1st South Staffords also lost some hundreds of men, and was only saved by fine handling on the part of Colonel Ovens. Kruisiek was abandoned, and a new line taken up half a mile farther back. It was a critical night, during which the energy and firmness of General Capper were splendidly employed in re-forming and stiffening his sorely-tried division. On the 26th the Twentieth Brigade, which had been so heavily hit the day before, was drawn out of the line for a rest, and the two other brigades closed up to cover a shorter line. The work of the Twentieth at Kruisiek had been magnificent, but their losses were appalling, including their Brigadier, Ruggles-Brise. Here, for the instant, we shall leave the Seventh Division, though their ordeal was by no means done, and we shall turn to those other forces which had been forming in the northern or Ypres section of the long battle line.

ARRIVAL OF FIRST CORPS.

The reader will remember, if he casts his mind back, that the whole British line, as it extended from the south about October 18th, consisted of the Second Corps and the advance guard of the Indians near La Bassée; then, in succession, the Third Corps in the Armentières district, the First Cavalry and Second Cavalry near Messines and Wytschaete, the Seventh Division near Gheluvelt, and finally the Third Cavalry on their left, joining up with the French, who carried the line to where the Belgians were re-forming on the Yser. The First Corps had detrained from the Aisne, and was concentrated between St. Omer and Hazebrouck upon October 18th and 19th. They represented a last British reserve of about thirty-five thousand men to set against the large new armies who were advancing from the north. The urgent question to be decided was where they should be placed, since there were so many points which needed reinforcement.

Sir John French has explained in his despatch the reasons which swayed him in deciding this question. "I knew," he said, "that the enemy were by this time in greatly superior strength upon the Lys and that the Second and Third Cavalry and Fourth Corps (Seventh Division) were holding a much wider front than their strength and numbers warranted. Taking these facts alone into consideration, it would have appeared wise to throw the First Corps in to strengthen the line, but this would have left the country north and east of Ypres and the Ypres Canal open to a wide turning movement by the Third Reserve Corps and at least one Landwehr Division which I knew to be operating in that region. I was also aware that the enemy was bringing large reinforcements up from the east, which could only be opposed for several days by two or three French cavalry divisions, some French Territorials, and the Belgian army."

He proceeds to state his opinion that the Belgian army was in no condition to withstand unsupported such an attack, and that if it were allowed to sweep past us it was very likely to wash away all opposition before it, and get into the Channel ports in our rear. With this consideration in his mind, Sir John French took the bold and dangerous, but absolutely necessary, step of leaving the long, thin, thirty-mile line to do the best it could, and prolonging it by another ten or twelve miles by forming up the First Corps on the same alignment, so as to present as long a British breakwater as possible to the oncoming flood. There was nothing else to be done, and the stronger the flood the more need there was to do it, but it is safe to say that seldom in history has so frail a barrier stood in the direct track of so terrible a storm.

In accordance with this resolution, Haig's First Corps moved, on October 20th, through Poperinghe and Ypres and took their place upon the north or left side of the Seventh Division. On their own left in this position was the French cavalry corps of General de Mitry, while the Third Division of British cavalry was on their right. As the movement commenced Sir John French had a personal interview with General Haig, in which he held out hopes that the greater part of the new German levies had been deflected to hold our southern advance, and that he would only find the Third Reserve Corps and some Landwehr in front of him to the north of Ypres. His object was to advance upon the line of Bruges and drive the enemy towards Ghent. Meanwhile, the gallant little Belgian army, which was proving itself a glutton at fighting, was entrenched along the line of the Ypres Canal and the Yser River, where they held their own manfully in spite of all that they had endured.

ADVANCE OF HAIG'S CORPS.

The first large landmark in the direction of Bruges was Thourout, and towards this the First Corps, with the Third Cavalry Division upon its right, took its first steps, little thinking that it was butting forward against an approaching army of at least double its own strength. It was very quickly made to realize its position, however, and any dreams of a victorious entry into Bruges were speedily dispelled. Only too fortunate would it be if it could hold its own line without retreat and disaster. Upon the 21st Haig's men attacked Poelcappelle and Passchendaele, French cavalry and Territorials (the Eighty-seventh and Eighty-ninth Divisions) under General Bidon advancing on their left, while the Seventh Division, as already described, kept pace upon its right. There was strong opposition from the first, but the corps advanced in spite of it until the pressure from the north became too severe for the French, whose flank was exposed to the full force of it.

The British attack upon the morning in question was planned as follows. The Second Division was to advance upon Passchendaele. The First had orders to take Poelcappelle. The latter movement was headed by the Third Brigade, who were directed by General Landon to go forward about nine o'clock,

the 1st Queen's Surrey having the station for their objective, while the 1st South Wales Borderers attacked the village. The 1st Gloucesters were in reserve. The enemy met the attack with shell-fire, which it was difficult to locate, as the country was flat and enclosed. The progress of the movement, however, was steady though slow. About ten o'clock there were signs of a considerable hostile infantry advance from the north. The attack, however, made good progress up to midday, when there was a general retirement of the French Territorials, followed later by the French cavalry upon the British left. They moved back towards Bixschoote. The Gloucester Regiment, who had been thrown out to reinforce that flank, were also driven back, and were in turn reinforced by the Coldstream Guards. This battalion executed a bayonet charge in clearing the small village of Koekuit, but later on had to retire, finding their flank exposed. It should be mentioned that one French corps, the Seventh Cavalry Division, kept its position upon the British left, and it is also only fair to point out that as the German advance was mainly from the north, it was upon the left flank, covered by the French, that it would fall. The 1st Camerons were now dispatched to the flank to stiffen the French resistance, taking up their position near the inn which is midway upon the road between Steenstraate and Langemarck, north of the village of Pilken —an inn with which they were destined to have stirring associations. With the support of the 46th R.F.A., the Highlanders held up a German brigade which was thrusting through behind our main line, but farther west, in the Steenstraate direction, the defence against a northern advance was miserably thin, consisting only of one company of the Sussex Regiment and the 116th R.F.A. In the circumstances the more success Haig's troops attained in front, and the more they advanced, the more dangerous was their position upon the flank.

About two-thirty the German advance from the north became more formidable, and the 1st South Wales Borderers, between Langemarck and Poelcappelle, were heavily counter-attacked and suffered considerable loss, between two and three hundred in all. Two companies of the 2nd Welsh were pushed up to their help. It was clear, however, that the advance could not be continued. The First Brigade was therefore ordered to hold the line between Steenstraate and Langemarck, with their centre at the inn north of Pilken, so as to face the German advance from the north. Then from Langemarck the British line turned southwards, being carried on for two miles by the Third Brigade to hold the enemy who were coming from the east. The Second Brigade was in reserve at Boesinghe. During this long and difficult day the Second Division, operating upon the right of the First, was not subjected to the same anxiety about its flank. It advanced upon its objective in the face of severe opposition, ending more than once in a brief bayonet encounter. Several counter-attacks were made by the Germans, but they were all beaten back with loss. About two o'clock, however, the Second Division learned of the flank pressure which was holding up the First Division, and also of the extreme need for help experienced by the Twenty-second Brigade of the Seventh Division on their right. In these circumstances it was necessary to abandon the idea of further advance and to send south those reinforcements the opportune arrival of which has been already described.

As a net result of the two days' operations General Haig was not able to attain the line of Passchendaele-Poelcappelle, as originally planned, but he gained sufficient ground to establish himself from Langemarck to Zonnebeke, more than half-way to his objective. The whole character of the operations during these days was more of the familiar British type, being conducted upon the surface of the earth rather than under it, and cavalry making its last appearance for many a long day. Many fine deeds of valour were done. In one of these Captain Rising, of the Gloucester Regiment, with ninety men, defended some point with such heroic tenacity that when, some days afterwards, the Brigadier attempted to get the names of the survivors for commendation not one could be found. Quaintly valorous also is the picture of Major Powell, of the North Lancashires, leading his wing with a badly-sprained ankle, and using a cottage chair for a crutch, upon which he sat down between rushes. It is hopeless, however, and even invidious to pick instances where the same spirit animated all. The result was definite. It had been clearly shown that the enemy were in considerably greater strength than had been imagined, and instead of a rearguard action from weak forces the British found themselves in the presence of a strong German advance. All day large forces of the enemy were advancing from Roulers and were impinging upon different points of the Franco-British line. These

troops were composed of partially-trained men, volunteers and reservists, but they attacked with the utmost determination, and endured heavy losses with great bravery. It is a remarkable proof of the elaborate preparations for war made by Germany that, behind all their original gigantic array, they still had ready within the country sufficient arms and uniforms to fit out these five new army corps. He who plans finds it easy to prepare, and whoever will compare this profusion of munitions in Germany with the absolute lack of them in the Allied countries will have no further doubt as to which Government conspired against the peace of the world.

On this day, October 21st, Sir John French began to feel that there were new factors in his front. In the evening, at a meeting with Haig and Rawlinson, he discussed the unexpected strength of the German reinforcements and showed that the scheme of an advance upon Bruges would become impossible in the face of such numbers. Intelligence reports indicated that there was already a German army corps in front of each British division. General Joffre had promised considerable French reinforcements upon October 24th, and all that could be done was for the British troops to hold their ground to the last man and to resist every pressure until the equality of the forces could be restored. Could they hold the line till then? That was the all-important question.

October 22nd was the first day of that long ordeal of incessant attacks which the First Corps was called upon to endure, until by constant attrition it had become almost as worn as its neighbour to the south, the Seventh Division. On this day the German attack, which had not yet attained the full volume of later days, spent itself here and there along the extended lines. Only at one point did the enemy have some success, which, however, was the prelude to disaster.

FIGHT OF PILKEN INN.

The line from Steenstraate to Langemarck, which defended the British left flank, was held by the First Brigade, the Scots Guards upon the extreme left, then the Cameron Highlanders, and the Black Watch in reserve. In the middle of the line north of Pilken was a solitary inn, already mentioned, round which trenches had been cut in horse-shoe fashion, the concavity of the shoe pointing southwards. This point marked the junction between the Camerons and the Scots Guards. About 3 p.m. this position was driven in and captured by a sudden and determined advance of the enemy. The German charge was a fine feat of arms, for it was carried out largely by *Einjahrige*, who may be roughly compared to the Officers' Training Corps of our British system. These high-spirited lads advanced singing patriotic songs, and succeeded in carrying the trenches in the face of soldiers who are second to none in the British Army—soldiers, too, who had seen much service, while the German cadets were new to the work. The performance was much appreciated by British officers and men.

The Black Watch endeavoured without success to restore the line, and the 1st Northamptons were called upon from divisional reserve, while from all parts troops converged towards the gap. On the arrival of the Northamptons they pushed up towards the interval which now existed between the Scots Guards and the remains of the Camerons, but found the gap broader than had been thought, and strongly occupied. It was then evening, and it was thought best to delay the counter-attack until morning and so have time to bring up reinforcements. The 1st North Lancashires and the 2nd South Staffords were accordingly ordered up, together with the 1st Queen's Surrey and the 2nd Rifles, the whole operation being under the immediate command of General Bulfin. The advance began at six in the morning, over very difficult ground which had been barb-wired during the night. The progress was slow but steady, and at eleven o'clock an assault upon the inn was ordered. The position was critical, since the enemy was now firmly lodged in the very centre of the flank of the British position, and was able to enfilade all the trenches of the First Division. The Queen's Surrey, the 2nd King's Royal Rifles, and the 1st North Lancashires charged home with splendid energy, capturing the inn and the trenches round it, besides releasing sixty Camerons and capturing over five hundred prisoners. The trenches were carried by the North Lancashires, led by Major Carter. It was the second time within six weeks that this battalion had made a decisive bayonet charge. The price paid was six officers and one hundred and fifty men. The inn itself was rushed by Captain Creek's company of the Queen's, while Major Watson, of the same regiment, organized the final advance. The fighting at this point was not finished for the day. In the late evening the enemy, with fine tenacity of purpose, attacked the inn once more and drove the Queen's Surrey out of a salient,

The line was then straightened on each side of the inn and remained firm. Both the attack on the inn and the defence of the line were splendidly supported by the field artillery.

Whilst the First Brigade had in this fashion got into and out of a dangerous position, there had been a severe attack upon two regiments of Landon's Third Brigade stationed at Langemarck. The defending units were the 2nd Welsh Regiment and the 1st Gloucesters. Aided by a strong artillery backing, they beat off these attacks and inflicted a very heavy loss upon the enemy. The Allied line to the north was solid and unbroken.

BRAVERY OF ENEMY.

The British losses during these operations of the First Corps up to October 24th amounted to one thousand five hundred men, while those of the Germans were exceedingly heavy. These inexperienced troops advanced with an indiscriminating enthusiasm which exposed them to severe retaliation. It is doubtful if at any time in the campaign the British fire found so easy a mark. One thousand five hundred dead were counted in the vicinity of Langemarck, and the total loss (including over six hundred prisoners) could not have been less than ten thousand men. Correspondence afterwards captured showed that the Twenty-third Reserve Corps sustained such losses that for a time at least it was out of action. The Twenty-seventh Reserve Corps was also hard hit. A letter from a soldier in the 246th Regiment mentions that only eighty men were left of his battalion after the action of the 24th.

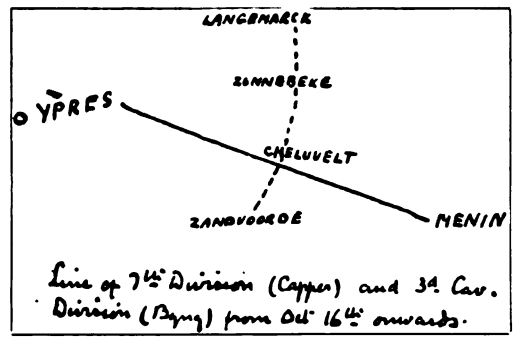
On October 24th and 25th the arrival of French reinforcements allowed the British to shorten up their defensive line, which had been unduly extended. The Seventeenth Division of the Ninth French Army Corps took over the line of the Second Division, which was drawn back to St. Jean, and in turn took over part of the front of the Seventh Division. French Territorial troops, under General de Mitry, relieved the First British Division on the line Hannebeke—Langemarck—Steenstraate. The First Division was drawn back to Zillebeke.

ADVANCE OF SECOND DIVISION.

Meantime the Second Division, having the French Ninth Corps upon its left and the Seventh Division upon its right, made an attack towards Bacelaer, taking two guns and some prisoners. This advance was renewed upon the 26th, this being the day upon which, as already described, the Germans pushed back the Twentieth Brigade of the Seventh Division at the Kruisiek salient, which brought the Second Division to a standstill.

In this movement forward of the Second Division from October 24th to 26th theGuards' Fourth Brigade were on the right, the Sixth Brigade on the left, with the French to the left of them. The Fifth Brigade were mainly in reserve. Two small villages were taken by storm, the Germans being driven out of loopholed houses, though at a considerable cost of officers and men. It was in this operation that Colonel Bannatyne, the gallant leader of the 1st King's Liverpool, was killed. Ten other officers and several hundred men of this corps were killed or wounded. The 1st Berkshires, fighting to the left of the King's, shared in its losses and in its success. The Irish Guards were held up before Reutel and separated from the rest of the force, but managed to extricate themselves after some anxious hours.

On October 27th Sir John French came in person to Hooge, at the rear of the fighting line, and inquired into the state of the hard-pressed troops. He found the Seventh to be now such a skeleton division that it was thought best to join it with Haig's First Corps, forming one single command.



The attendant Third Cavalry Division was also attached to the First Corps. These readjustments took place upon October 27th. They were, of course, of a temporary character until the eagerly-awaited Eighth Division should arrive and so give General Rawlinson a complete Fourth Corps. At present there was a very immediate prospect that half of it might be annihilated before the second half appeared. The general arrangement of this section of the battlefield was now as depicted in the accompanying diagram, the Seventh Division being entirely south of the Ypres-Menin roadway.

THE GUARDS AND GORDON HIGHLANDERS AT CLOSE QUARTERS WITH

This date, the 27th, was memorable only for an advance of the Sixth Brigade—these continual advances against odds were wonderful examples of the aggressive spirit of the British soldiers. In this instance ground was gained, but at the cost of some casualties, especially to the 1st Rifles, who lost Prince Maurice of Battenberg and a number of officers and men.

FIGHT OF KRUISIEK CROSS-ROADS.

And now the great epic of the first Battle of Ypres was rising to its climax, and the three days of supreme trial for the British Army was to begin. Early upon October 29th a very heavy attack developed upon the line of the Ypres-Menin road. There is a village named Gheluvelt, which is roughly half-way upon this tragic highway. It lay now immediately behind the centre of the British line. About half a mile in front of it the position ran through the important cross-roads which lead to the village of Kruisiek, still in the British possession. This line through the Kruisiek cross-roads was that which was furiously assailed upon this morning, and the attack marked the beginning of a great movement to drive in the front which continued throughout the 30th and culminated in the terrible ordeal of the 31st, the crisis of the Ypres battle and possibly of the Western campaign.

FitzClarence's First Brigade lay to the north of the road and the battered, much-enduring Twentieth Brigade upon the south. They were destined together to give such an example of military tenacity during that day as has seldom been equalled and never exceeded, so that the fight for the Kruisiek cross-road may well live in history amongst those actions, like Albuera and Inkermann, which have put the powers of British infantry to an extreme test. The line was held by about five thousand men, but no finer units were to be found in the whole Army. The attack was conducted by an army corps with the eyes of their Emperor and an overpowering artillery encouraging them from the rear. Many of the defending regiments, especially those of the Twentieth Brigade, had already been terribly wasted. It was a line of weary and desperate men who faced the German onslaught.

The attack began in the mists of the early morning. The opening was adverse to the British, for the enemy, pushing very boldly forward upon a narrow front and taking full advantage of the fog, broke a way down the Menin road and actually got past the defending line before the situation was under-

THE GERMANS AT A CRITICAL MOMENT IN THE BATTLE OF YPRES.

stood. The result was that the two regiments which flanked the road, the 1st Black Watch and the 1st Grenadiers, were fired into from behind and endured terrible losses. Among the Grenadiers Colonel Earle, Majors Forrester and Stucley, Lord Richard Wellesley, and a number of other officers fell, while out of six hundred and fifty privates only one hundred and fifty were eventually left standing. The 2nd Gordons, upon the right of the Grenadiers, suffered nearly as heavily, while the 1st Coldstream, upon the left of the Black Watch, was perhaps the hardest hit of all, for at the end of that dreadful day it had not a single officer fit for duty. The right company of the 1st Scots Guards shared the fate of the Coldstream. The remains of the line were pushed back for a quarter of a mile and Kruisiek was evacuated, but the dead and wounded who remained in the trenches far exceeded in numbers those who were able to withdraw.

Two small bodies who were cut off by the German advance did not fall back with their comrades, and each of them made a splendid and successful resistance. The one near Kruisiek was a mixed party under Major Bottomley of the 2nd Queen's West Surrey. The other was C Company of the 2nd Gordons under Captain R. S. Gordon. These small islands of khaki, in the midst of a broad stream of grey, lay so tight and fired so straight that they inflicted very great damage upon the enemy, and were able to hold their own, in ever-diminishing numbers, until under the protection of darkness they regained the British line.

In the meantime, a number of small dashing counter-attacks by the indomitable infantry was bringing the British line forward again. South of the road the Gordons, under Colonel Uniacke, dashed themselves again and again against the huge host which faced them, driving them back, and then in their turn recoiling before the ponderous advance of the army corps. They were maddened by the sound of the rolling fire ahead of them, which showed that their own C Company was dying hard. In one of these counter-attacks Captain Brooke brought every straggler into the fray, and died while trying to cut his way through to his comrades. To the north of the road Captain Stephen, with the remains of the 1st Scots Guards, threw themselves upon the German flank and staggered it by their fire. The Germans, who had almost reached Gheluvelt, were now worried in this way on either flank, while the 2nd Borders and the Welsh Borderers with the rallied remains of the broken regiments were still

facing them in front. The enemy was held, was stricken front and flank with a murderous fire, and recoiled back down the Menin road. Imperial eyes and overmastering guns were equally powerless to drive them through that iron defence.

The Second Division, to the north of the road in the direction of Reutel, had been ordered to counter-attack, and the other brigades of the Seventh Division to the south did the same. While Haig had a man standing he was ready to hit back. Between these two flanking forces there was a movement in the centre to follow the Germans back and to recover some of the lost ground. Landon's Third Brigade, less the Gloucester Regiment, was pushed forward in counter-attack. These troops moved past Gheluvelt and advanced along the line of the road, the 1st Queen's Surrey, their right-hand unit, linking up by a happy chance with their own 2nd Battalion, who were now on the left of the Twenty-second Brigade of the Seventh Division. Left of the Queen's were the 2nd Welsh to the immediate south of the main road, while to their left again lay the 1st South Wales Borderers, in front of the village of Gheluvelt. By evening these troops had recovered some of the ground, but the village of Kruisiek, which had always constituted a salient, was now abandoned. The cross-roads also remained in the hands of the enemy. Landon's Brigade continued to bar the further German advance and prepared for the renewed and heavier blow which all knew to be in readiness, and which was destined two days later to bring them a glorious annihilation.

It was clear upon the evening of the 29th that serious mischief was afoot, for there were great signs of movement on the German side, and all night the continual rattle of wheels was heard to the eastward. These menacing sounds were actually caused by a very strong reinforcement, the Fifteenth German Corps (Strasburg) of the regular army, which, followed by the Thirteenth Corps and the Second Bavarian Corps, were coming into the battle line with the declared intention of smashing their way through to Ypres. Correspondence, afterwards captured, showed that the German Emperor had issued a special appeal to these troops, declaring that the movement was one which would be of decisive importance to the war. It was, of course, not the venerable town of Ypres which had assumed such a place in the mind both of the Emperor and his people, but it was Calais and the Channel coast to which it was the door. Once in the possession of these points, it seemed to their perfervid minds that they would be in a position to constrain Great Britain to an ignominious peace, a course which would surely have ruined the cause of the Allies and placed the whole world under the German heel. No less was the issue at stake. The British Army from Langemarck in the north to La Bassée in the south were resolutely determined that the road was barred, while to left and to right they had stout-hearted comrades of Belgium and of France.

FIGHT OF ZANDVOORDE.

At half-past six upon October 30th a very heavy attack developed, which involved the whole line of the First Corps and also the French Ninth Corps upon its left. This attack upon the left was carried out by the Reserve Corps 26 and 27, with whom we had had previous dealings, and it was repulsed with considerable loss by the French and the Sixth British Brigade. To the south, however, the British were very violently engaged down the whole line of trenches from the position of the Seventh Division near the Ypres-Menin road, through Zandvoorde, where the Third Cavalry Division was holding on under great difficulties, and on southward still, past the position of the Second Cavalry down to Messines, where the First Cavalry Division was also heavily engaged. The front of battle was not less than twelve miles in length, with one continuous long-drawn rattle of small arms and roar of guns from end to end.

The British may have anticipated that the chief blow would fall at the same spot as had been attacked the day before. As a matter of fact, it was directed farther south, at Zandvoorde, on the immediate right of the Seventh Division.

The first sign of success for the strenuous German efforts upon October 30th was the driving in of Kavanagh's Seventh Guards' Cavalry Brigade from their trenches at the Zandvoorde Ridge. On this ridge, which is not more than a hundred and twenty feet high, the Germans concentrated so tremendous and accurate a fire that the trenches were in many places demolished and became entirely untenable. The survivors of the Life Guards and Blues who made up this brigade withdrew steadily through the reserve trenches, which were held by the Sixth Brigade, consisting of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, the 1st Royals, and the 10th Hussars, and reformed at Klein Zillebeke in the rear. Two squadrons, however, and Lord Worsley's machine-gun section were

killed or taken by the assailants. The unoccupied trenches were seized by the Sixth Bavarian Reserve Division, who advanced rapidly in order to improve their advantage, while their artillery began to pound the reserves. The cavalry had been strengthened, however, by the Greys and 3rd Hussars upon the left, while the 4th Hussars lined up on the right, and C, I, and K Horse Artillery batteries vigorously supported. In spite of great pressure, the position was held. Farther south the First Cavalry Division was also at very close grips with the Twenty-sixth Division of the Thirteenth German Army Corps, and was hard put to it to hold its own. Along the whole cavalry position there was extreme strain. A squadron of the 1st Royals were forced to evacuate the château of Holebeke, and the line in this quarter was pushed back as far as St. Eloi, thus flattening a considerable salient.

The danger of a position which consists of so long a line with few reserves is that any retirement at any point immediately exposes the flanks of the neighbouring units to right and left. Thus the evacuation of Zandvoorde threw open the right flank of the Seventh Division, even as its left had been in the air upon the day before. On getting through, the Germans were on the right rear of the 1st Welsh Fusiliers and enfiladed them badly, destroying all the officers and a considerable proportion of the regiment, which had already been greatly reduced. Colonel Cadogan was among those who fell. The Twenty-second Brigade was forced to fall back, and the 2nd Yorkshires and 2nd Scots Fusiliers, of the Twenty-first Brigade, being left in a salient, suffered heavily. Lieutenant-Colonel Mackenzie of the latter regiment was among the casualties. These two regiments held on with the greatest determination until orders to retire reached them, which were somewhat belated, as several orderlies were killed in bringing them. The 2nd Bedfords, who had themselves sustained very severe losses from the German artillery fire, covered the retirement of the remains of these two gallant units. The Seventh Division then covered the line from the canal through Klein Zillebeke and along the front of the woods to near Gheluvelt.

The position was now most critical. The Germans were in possession of Zandvoorde Ridge on the British right flank, a most important position, whence guns could command a considerable area. Ypres was only three miles distant. There was nothing but a line of weary and partially broken infantry to protect the flank from being entirely pierced. The whole of a German active army corps was attacking upon this line. The order was given to hold the new positions at all costs, but on the evening of the 30th the situation was full of menace for the morrow. The German flood was still thundering against the barrier, and the barrier seemed to be giving. At about 2 p.m. on October 30th the 1st Irish Guards and the 2nd Grenadiers, who were in reserve to two battalions of the Coldstream in trenches in the Polygon Wood, near Reutel Village, were ordered to help the Seventh Division. General Capper subsequently directed them to take the place of the cavalry on the right of his division. The Irish Guards were accordingly on the right of the Seventh Division from now onwards, and the Grenadiers were on their right, extending down to the canal in front of Klein Zillebeke. The commander of the Ninth French Corps also, with that fine loyalty which his comrades have shown again and again during the war, easing many a difficult and perhaps saving some impossible situations, put three battalions and some cavalry at the disposal of the British. Two regiments of Bulfin's Second Brigade were also brought across and thrust into the gap. But the outlook that evening was not cheering. The troops had been fighting hard for two days without a break. The losses had been heavy. The line had been driven back and was greatly strained. It was known that the Germans were in great strength and that the attack would be renewed on the morrow. The troops and their leaders faced the immediate future in a spirit of sombre determination.

FIGHT OF GHELUVELT.

During the 30th Landon's Brigade had strengthened their position near Gheluvelt, and General Haig, realizing that this was the key of his line, moved up the 2nd King's Royal Rifles and the 1st North Lancashires to form a reserve under the orders of General Landon. These regiments took a position south-west of Gheluvelt and connected up more closely between the Seventh Division and the Third Brigade of the First Division. It was well that a closely-knitted line had been formed, for at the dawn of day upon the 31st a most terrific attack was made, which was pushed with unexampled fierceness during the whole day, falling chiefly upon the centre and left of the Seventh Division and upon the 1st Queen's Surrey and 2nd Welsh of the Third Brigade.

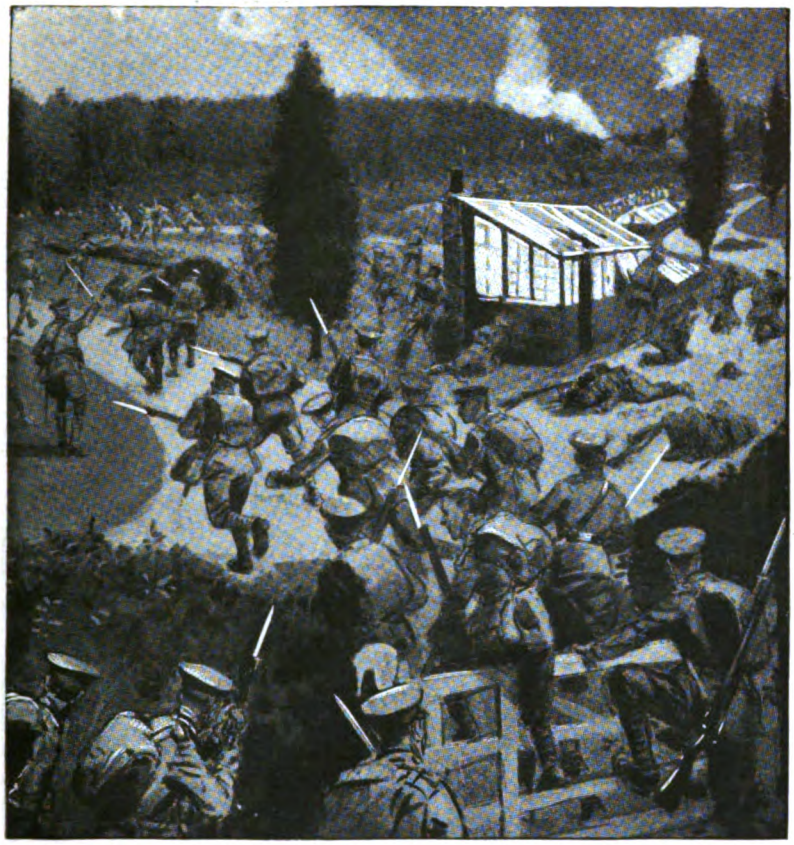
THE GLORIOUS CHARGE OF THE 2nd WORCESTERS AT AT A CRUCIAL

A weak point developed, unfortunately, in the front line, for the Seventh Division in its enfeebled condition was further weakened by forming somewhat of a salient in the Kruisiek direction. They behaved with all their usual magnificent gallantry, but they were not numerous enough to hold the ground. The line was broken and the remains of the 2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers, after being exposed to heavy fire from 5.30 a.m., were outflanked and surrounded in the early afternoon. The bulk of the survivors of this battalion had been sent to reinforce the line elsewhere, but the remainder, some sixty in number, were killed, wounded, or taken, including their gallant colonel, Baird Smith, who had been hit the day before. The Picton tradition which disregards wounds unless they are absolutely crippling was continually observed by these stern soldiers.

The left wing of the Seventh Division began to retire, and the 1st Queen's Surrey upon the right of the Third Brigade fell back in conformity. It was a great morning in the history of this regiment, as the two battalions had fought side by side, and their colonels, Pell and Coles, had both fallen in the action.

The line of the Third Brigade had been drawn up across the Menin road some four hundred yards to the east of the village. The road itself was held by the 2nd Welsh Regiment, supported by the 54th Battery R.F.A. (Major Peel), which was immediately behind the village. Both the battalion and the battery fought desperately in a most exposed situation. The Welsh Regiment were driven out of their trenches by a terrific shell-fire followed by an infantry attack. They lost during the day nearly six hundred men, with sixteen officers, killed, wounded, or missing. Colonel Morland was killed and Major Prichard badly wounded. Finally, after being pushed back, holding every possible point, they formed up under Captain Rees across the open in a thin skirmishing line to cover the battery, which was doing great work by holding back the German advance. One German gun was in action upon the Menin road. Lieutenant Blewitt took a British gun out on to the bare road to face it, and a duel ensued at five hundred yards, which ended by the German gun being knocked out at the third shot by a direct hit.

When the First Division at the centre of the British line were driven in, as already described, and the Seventh Division were pushed back into the woods, the situation became most critical, for there was a general retirement, with a victorious enemy pressing swiftly on upon the British centre. The men behaved splendidly, and the officers kept their heads,

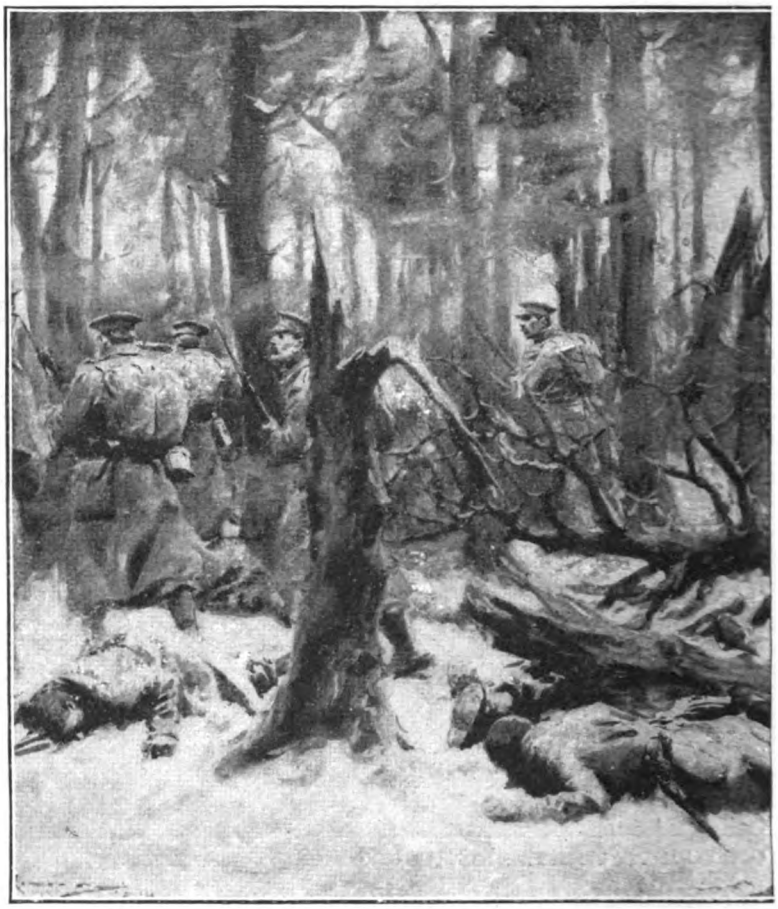


GHELUVELT WHICH DID MUCH TO SAVE THE SITUATION TIME.

taking every opportunity to form up a new line. The 2nd Rifles and 1st North Lancashires in immediate support of the centre did all that men could to hold it firm. The German artillery lengthened their range as the British fell back, and the infantry, with their murderous quick-firers scattered thickly in the front line, came rapidly on. Communications were difficult, and everything for a time was chaos and confusion. It looked for an hour or two as if Von Deimling, the German leader, might really carry out his War Lord's command and break his road to the sea. It was one of the decisive moments of the world's history, for if the Germans at that period had seized the Channel ports, it is difficult to say how disastrous the result might have been both to France and to the British Empire. At that moment of darkness and doubt a fresh misfortune, which might well have proved overwhelming, came upon the hard-pressed forces. About one-thirty a shell exploded in the headquarters at the château of Hooge, and both General Lomax, of the First Division, and General Munro, of the Second, were put out of action, the first being wounded and the second rendered unconscious by the shock. It was a brain injury to the Army, and a desperately serious one, for besides the two divisional commanders the single shell had killed or wounded Colonels Kerr and Perceval, Major Paley, Captains Ommany and Trench, and Lieutenant Gifford. General Landon, of the Third Brigade, took the command of the First Division at a moment's notice, and the battle went forward. A line was hurriedly formed, men digging as for their lives, whilst broken units threw themselves down to hold off the rolling grey wave that thundered behind. The new position was three-quarters of a mile back and about four hundred yards in advance of Veldhoek, which is the next village down the Ypres road. The Seventh Division had also been rolled back, but the fiery Capper, their divisional chief, who has been described as a British Samurai, was everywhere among his regiments, re-forming and bracing them. The British soldiers, with their incomparable regimental officers, rose to the crisis, whilst General Haig was behind the line at Hooge, directing and controlling, like a great engineer who seeks to hold a dam which carries an overpowering head of water. By three o'clock the new line was firmly held.

ADVANCE OF WORCESTERS.

Now General Haig, seeking round for some means of making a counter-attack, perceived that on his left flank he had some reserve troops who had been somewhat clear of the storm and might be employed. The 2nd

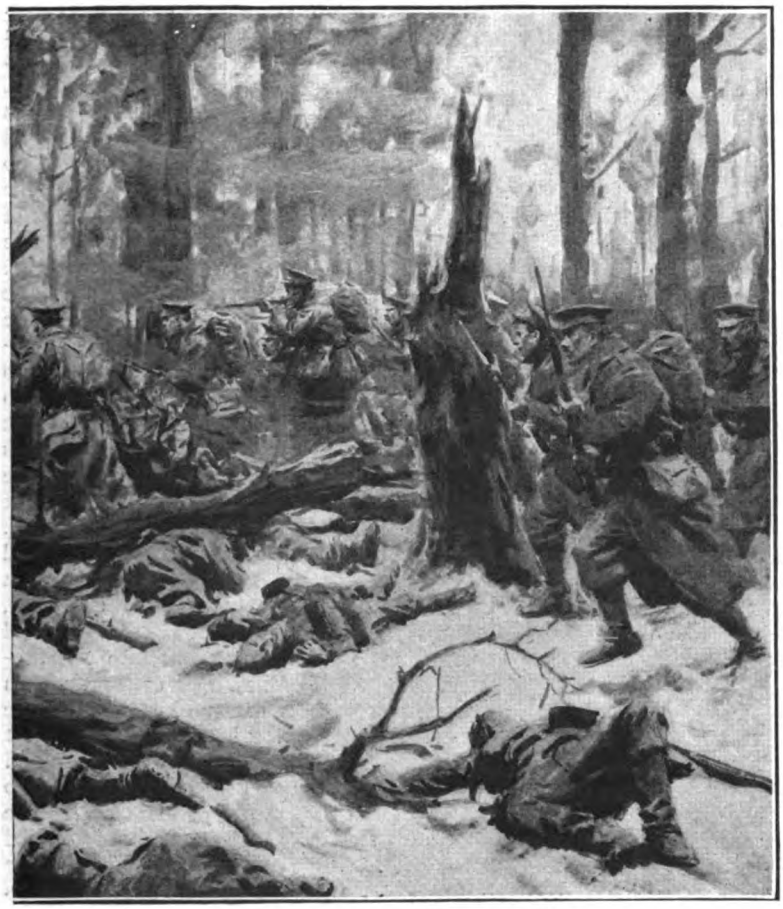


BRITISH TROOPS TURNING THE GERMANS OUT

Worcesters were ordered to advance upon Gheluvelt. On that flank the troops had not joined in the retirement, and, including the South Wales Borderers of the Third Brigade, were still in their original trenches, being just north of the swathe that had been cut in the British line, and just south of where the Second Division, extended to cracking point, with one man often for every eight or nine feet, and no supports, were defending the left flank of the Army.

When the village of Gheluvelt and the trenches to the north of it had been captured by the enemy, a gap had been left of about five hundred yards between the northern edge of the village and these South Wales Borderers. This gap the 2nd Worcesters were ordered to fill. They were in reserve at the time in the south-west corner of the Polygon Wood, but on being called upon they made a brilliant advance under Major Hankey. One company (A) was detached to guard the right flank of the advance. The other three companies came on for a thousand yards. At one point they had to cross two hundred and twenty yards of open under heavy shrapnel-fire. One hundred men fell, but the momentum of the charge was never diminished. Their rapid and accurate fire drove back the German infantry, while their open order formation diminished their own losses. Finally they dashed into the trenches and connected up the village with the line of the Welsh Borderers. Their right platoons, under Captain Williams, held the village until nearly midnight. Altogether the advance cost the battalion one hundred and eighty-seven casualties, including three officers, out of five hundred and fifty who were in the ranks that day. Up to dusk the Worcesters were exposed to heavy shrapnel-fire, and small detached parties of the enemy came round their right flank, but their position was strengthened and strongly held until the final readjustment of the line. It was a fine advance at a critical moment, and did much to save the situation. The whole movement was strongly supported by the guns of the 42nd R.F.A., and by some of the 1st Scots Guards upon the left of the Welsh Borderers.

It has been stated that a line had been formed near Veldhoek, but this difficult operation was not performed in an instant, and was rather the final equilibrium established after a succession of oscillations. The British were worn to a shadow. The 2nd Queen's had two officers and sixty men left that night, the 2nd Welsh had three officers and ninety-three men. Little groups, who might have been fitted into a large-sized



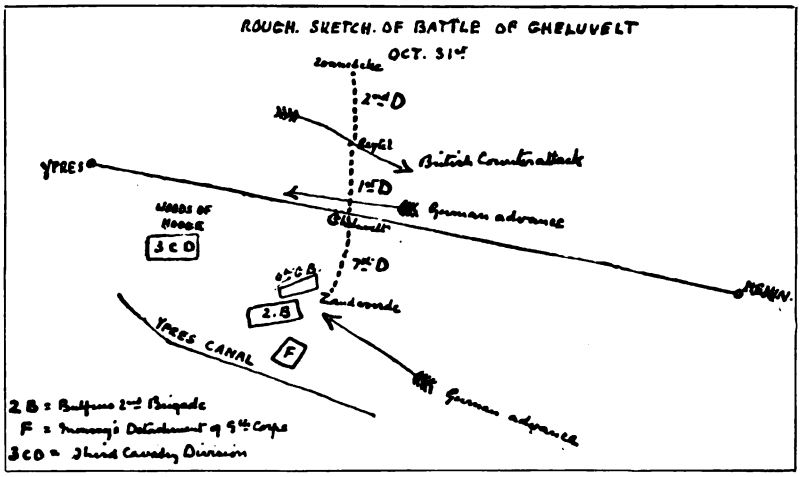
OF THEIR COVER IN THE WOODS OF HOOGE.

drawing-room, were settling a contention upon which the fate of the world might depend. But the Germans also had spent all their force. The rattle of musketry behind their advance was enough to tell them that the British were still in their trenches, and the guns were for ever playing on them with deadly effect. Gradually they began to dissolve away among the thick woods which flank the road. They were learning that to penetrate the line of a resolute adversary is not necessarily the prelude to victory. It may mean that the further you advance the more your flanks are exposed. So it was now, when the infantry to the north on one side and the Third Cavalry Division on the other were closing in on them. That long tentacle which was pushing its way towards Ypres had to be swiftly withdrawn once more, and withdrawn under a heavy fire from the 29th, 41st, and 45th field batteries.

GERMAN RECOIL.

The scattered German infantry who had taken refuge in the woods of Hooge, which lie to the south of the road, were followed up by mounted and dismounted men of the Royals, 10th Hussars, and 3rd Dragoon Guards, aided by some French cavalry. These troops advanced through the woods, killing or taking a number of the enemy. By nightfall the Germans had fallen back along the whole debated line, the various British units, though much disorganized, were in close touch with each other, and the original trenches had in the main been occupied, the Berkshire Regiment helping to close the gap in the centre. The flood had slowly ebbed away, and the shaken barrier was steady once more, thanks to the master hands which had so skilfully held it firm. The village of Gheluvelt remained in the hands of the Germans, but the British trenches were formed to the west of it, and the road to the sea was barred as effectually as ever. Such, in brief outline, was the action of Gheluvelt, which may well be given a name of its own, though it was only one supremely important episode in that huge contention which will be known as the first Battle of Ypres.

In the southern portion of the Ypres area at Klein Zillebeke a very sharp engagement was going on, which swung and swayed with as much violence and change as the main battle on the Menin road. The German attack here was hardly inferior in intensity to that in the north. Having pushed back Lawford's weak brigade (Twenty-second) it struck full upon part of Bulfin's Second Brigade, which



had been detached from the First Division and sent to cover the right of the Seventh Division. Its own left was now exposed and its situation for a time was critical. The German advance was sudden and impetuous, coming through a wood which brought the dense mass of the enemy's leading formation almost unseen right up to the British line. The position of the Second Brigade was pierced, and the two regiments present, the 2nd Sussex and the 1st Northamptons, together with the 2nd Gordons, were driven back with loss. Their brigadier rallied them some hundreds of yards to the rear, where they formed up into a skirmish line in the open, and, though unable to advance, kept back the Germans with their rifle-fire. The losses still continued, however, and the enemy came on again and again with numbers which seemed inexhaustible. Suddenly there was a charging yell from behind a low slope covering the rear, and over the brow there appeared some three hundred survivors of the 2nd Gordons, rushing at full speed with fixed bayonets. At the same moment the dismounted troopers of the Sixth Cavalry Brigade and a company of sappers ran forward to join in the charge. The whole British force was not one to three of its opponents, but as the reinforcing line swept on, cheering with all its might, the survivors of the hard-pressed brigade sprang up with a shout and the united wave burst over the Germans. Next moment they had broken and were flying for their lives through the Zwartelen Wood. The pursuit lasted for some distance, and a great number of the enemy were bayoneted, while more than five hundred were taken prisoners.

GENERAL RESULT.

There have been few more critical occasions in the British operations than this action upon October 31st, when the Germans so nearly forced their way to Ypres. It is the peculiarity of modern warfare that, although vast armies are locked in a close struggle, the number of men who can come into actual contact at any one point is usually far more limited than in the old days, when each host could view the other from wing to wing. Thus the losses in such an action are small as compared with the terrific death-roll of a Napoleonic battle. On the other hand, when the operations are viewed broadly and one groups a series of actions into one prolonged battle, like the Aisne or Ypres, then the resulting losses become enormous. The old battle was a local conflagration, short and violent. The new one is a widespread smoulder, breaking here and there into flame. In this affair of Gheluvelt the casualties of the British did not exceed two thousand or three thousand, while those of the Germans, who were more numerous and who incurred the extra loss which falls upon the attack, could not have been less than twice that figure. One thousand five hundred dead were actually picked up and six hundred prisoners were taken. Some hundreds of prisoners were also taken by the enemy. The British artillery, which worked desperately hard all day, had many losses both upon the 30th and the 31st. The 12th Battery R.F.A. had all its guns silenced but one, and many others were equally hard hit.

On the night of the 31st considerable French reinforcements began to arrive, and it was high time that they did so, for the First Corps, including the Seventh Division, were likely to bleed to death upon the ground that they were holding. It had stood the successive attacks of four German corps, and it had held its line against each of them. But its own ranks had been grievously thinned and the men were weary to death. The strain, it should be added, was equally great upon the Ninth French Corps to the north, which had its own set of assailants to contend with.

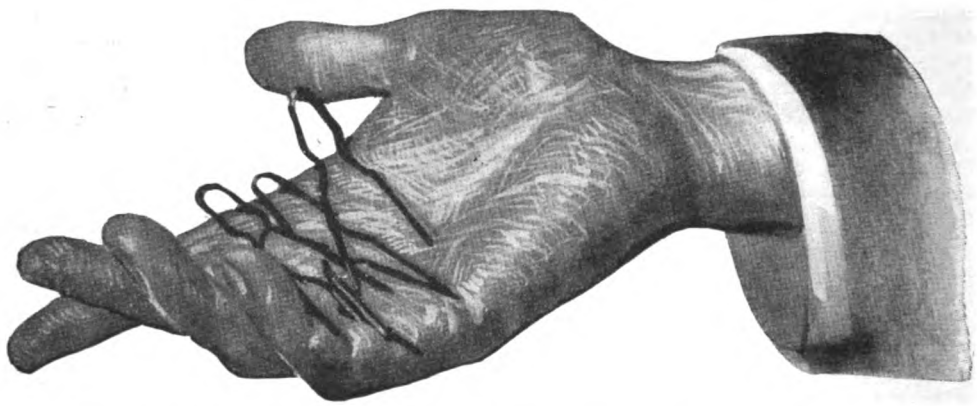
Now that the line of the Yser, so splendidly guarded by the Belgians, had proved to be impregnable, and that the French from Dixmude in the north had repulsed all attacks, the whole German advance upon Calais, for which Berlin was screaming, was centred upon the Ypres lines. It was time, then, that some relief should come to the hard-pressed troops. For several days the French on the right and the left took the weight of the attack upon themselves, and although the front was never free from fighting, there was a short period of comparative rest for Haig's tired men. In successive days they had lost Kruisiek, Zandvoorde, and Gheluvelt, but so long as they held the semicircle of higher ground which covers Ypres these small German gains availed them nothing.

A GREAT CRISIS.

Looking back at the three actions of the 29th, 30th, and especially of the 31st of October, one can clearly perceive that it was the closest thing to a really serious defeat which the Army has had since Le Cateau. If the Germans had been able to push home their attack once again, it is probable that they would have taken Ypres, and that the results would have been most serious. Sir John French is reported as having said that there was no time in the Mons retreat when he did not see his way, great as were his difficulties, but that there was a moment upon October 31st when he seemed to be at the end of his resources. To Sir John at Ypres converged all the cries for succour, and from him radiated the words of hope and encouragement which stiffened the breaking lines. To him and to his untiring lieutenant, Douglas Haig, the Empire owed more that day than has ever been generally realized. The latter was up to the firing line again and again rallying the troops. The sudden removal of the two divisional commanders of the First Corps was a dreadful blow at such a moment, and the manner in which General Landon, of the Third Brigade, took over the command of the First Division at a moment's notice was a most noteworthy performance. The fact that three divisions of infantry with brigades which resembled battalions, and battalions which were anything from companies to platoons, destitute of reserves save for a few dismounted cavalry, barred the path to a powerful German army, is one of the greatest feats of military history. It was a very near thing. There was a time, it is said, when the breech-blocks had actually been taken from the heavy guns in order to disable them, and some of the artillery had been passed back through Ypres. But the line held against all odds, as it has done so often in the past. The struggle was not over. For a fortnight still to come it was close and desperate. But never again would it be quite so perilous as on that immortal last day of October, when over the green Flemish meadows, beside the sluggish watercourses, on the fringes of the old-world villages, and in the heart of the autumn-tinted woods, two great Empires fought for the mastery.

Such was the British epic. There was another upon our left which was no less glorious, and which will be celebrated by the poets and historians of the lands to which the victors belong. It will tell of the glorious stand during this critical ten days of the Belgians, so weary, so battered, and yet so indomitable. It will tell how they made head against the hosts of the Duke of Würtemberg, and how in the end they flooded their own best land with the salt water which would sterilize it in order to cover their front. It will tell also of the splendid Frenchmen who fought at Dixmude, of Ronarch with his invincible marines, and of Grossetti, the fat and debonair, seated in an armchair in the village street and pointing the road to victory with his cane. Not least, perhaps, in that epic will be the tale of the British monitors who, with the deadly submarines upon one side of them and the heavy German batteries upon the other, ran into the Flemish coast and poured their fire upon the right flank of the attacking Germans. Ten days the great battle swung and swayed, and then here as at Ypres the wave of the invaders ebbed, or reached their definite flood. It would be an ungenerous foe who would not admit that they had fought bravely and well. Not all our hatred of their national ideals nor our contempt for their crafty misleaders can prevent us from saluting those German officers and soldiers who poured out their blood like water in the attempt to do that which was impossible.

(To be continued.)



THE ORDINARY HAIR-PINS.

By E. C. BENTLEY,

Author of "Trent's Last Case."

Illustrated by A. Gilbert, R.I.

A SMALL committee of friends persuaded Lord Aviemore to sit for a presentation portrait, and the painter to whom they gave the commission was Philip Trent. It was a task that fascinated him, for he had often seen and admired in public places the high, half-bald skull, vulture nose, and grim mouth of the peer who was said to be deeper in theology than any other layman, and whose devotion to charitable work had brought him national honour. It was only at the third sitting that Lord Aviemore's sombre taciturnity was laid aside.

"I believe, Mr. Trent," he remarked, abruptly, "that you used to have a portrait of my late sister-in-law here. I was told that it hung in this studio."

Trent continued his work quietly. "It was just a rough drawing I made, after seeing her in 'Carmen' before her marriage. It used to hang here. Before your first visit I removed it."

The sitter nodded slowly. "Very thoughtful of you. Nevertheless, I should much like to see it, if I may."

"Of course." And Trent drew the framed sketch from behind a curtain. Lord Aviemore gazed long in silence at Trent's very spirited likeness of the famous singer, while the artist worked busily to capture the first expression of feeling that he had so far seen on that impassive face. Lighted and softened by melancholy, it looked for the first time noble.

At last the sitter turned to him. "I would give a good deal," he said, simply, "to possess that drawing."

Trent shook his head. "I don't want to part with it." He laid a few strokes carefully on the canvas and went on: "You would like to know why, I dare say. I will tell you. It is my personal memory of a woman whom I found more admirable than any other I ever saw. Lillemor Wergeland's beauty and physical perfection were a marvel. Her voice was a miracle. Her spirit matched them. I never spoke to her; but everybody in my world talked about her, and many of them knew her."

Lord Aviemore said nothing for a few minutes. Then he spoke slowly. "I do not think you were far wrong about Lady

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Aviemore. Once I thought differently. When I heard that my elder brother was about to marry a *prima donna*, a woman whose portrait was sold all over the world, who was famous for extravagance in dress and what seemed to me undignified, self-advertising conduct—I was appalled when I heard from him of this engagement. I will not deny that I was also shocked at the idea of a marriage with the daughter of plain Norwegian peasants. She was an orphan of only ten years old when Colonel Stamer and his wife went to lodge at her brother's farm for the fishing. They fell in love with the child, and, having none of their own, they adopted her. All this my brother told me. He knew, he wrote, just what I would think; he only asked me to meet her, and then to judge. Of course, I did so at the first opportunity."

Lord Aviemore paused and stared thoughtfully at the portrait. "She charmed everyone who came near her," he went on presently. "I resisted the spell, but before they had been long married she had vanquished all my prejudice. Her life was all generous impulses and frank enjoyment. But she was not childish. It was not that she was what is called intellectual; but she had a singular spaciousness of mind in which nothing little or mean could live; it had, I used to fancy, some kinship with her Norwegian landscapes of mountain and sea. She was, as you say, extremely beautiful, with the vigorous purity of the fair-haired northern race. All sorts of men were at her feet; but my brother's marriage was the happiest I have ever known."

Trent worked busily upon his canvas, and soon the low, meditative voice resumed.

"It was almost this time six years ago—the middle of March—that I received the terrible news from Taormina. I had just returned from Canada, and I went out there at once. When I saw her she showed no emotion; but there was in her calmness the most unearthly sense of desolation that I have ever perceived. She believed, I found, that she was to blame. You have heard that a slight shock of earthquake caused the villa to collapse, and that my brother and his child were found dead in the ruins; you have heard that Lady Aviemore was sailing in the bay at the time. But you have probably not heard that my brother had a presentiment that their visit to Sicily would end in death, and wished to abandon it; that his wife laughed away his forebodings with her strong modern common sense. But we are of Highland blood and tradition, Mr. Trent, and such interior warnings are no trifles to us. . . . On the tenth day her husband and son were killed. She did not think, as you may suppose, that there was merely coincidence here. The shock changed her whole mental being; she believed then, as I believed, that my brother inwardly foreknew that death awaited him if he went to that place."

He said no more, until Trent remarked, "I know slightly a man called Selby, a solicitor, who was with Lady Aviemore just after her husband's death."

Lord Aviemore said that he remembered Mr. Selby. He said it with such a total absence of expression of any kind that the subject of Selby was killed instantly; and he did not resume that of the tragedy of her whom all the world remembered still as Lillemor Wergeland.

A few months later, when the portrait of Lord Aviemore was to be seen at the show of the N.S.P.P., Trent received a friendly note from Arthur Selby, who asked if Trent would do him the favour of calling at his office by appointment for a private talk. "I should like," he wrote, "to put a certain story before you, a story with a problem in it. I gave it up as a bad job long ago myself; but seeing your portrait of A. at the show reminded me of your reputation as an unraveller."

Thus it happened that, a few days later, Trent was closeted with Selby in one of the rooms of the firm in which that very capable, somewhat dandified, lawyer was a partner. Selby, who never wasted words, came quickly to the point.

"The story I referred to," he said, "is the Aviemore story. I was with her at the time of her suicide. I am an executor of her will. In the strictest confidence, I should like to tell you that story as I know it." He folded his arms upon the broad writing-table between them, and went on: "You know all about the accident. I will start with March 10th, when Lord Aviemore and his son were buried in the cemetery at Taormina. His widow left the villa next day, discharging all the servants except her maid, with whom she went to the Hotel Cavour. There, as I gathered, she seldom left her rooms. She was undoubtedly quite overwhelmed by what had happened, though she seems never to have lost her grip on herself. Her brother-in-law, the present peer, arrived on the 15th. He had only just returned from Canada." Selby raised his finger and repeated, "From Canada, you will remember. He had gone

out to get ideas about the emigration prospect, I understood. He remained at the hotel, meaning to accompany her home when she should feel equal to the journey. It was not until the 18th that we received a long telegram from her, asking if we could send someone representing the firm to her at Taormina; she stated that she wished to discuss business matters, but did not yet feel able to travel. You understand that Lady Aviemore, who already possessed considerable means of her own, came into a large income under her husband's will. She was a client who could afford to indulge her whims.

"I went out to Taormina. On my arrival Lady Aviemore saw me and told me quite calmly that she was acquainted with the provisions of her late husband's will, and that she now wished to make her own. I took her instructions and prepared the will. The next day I and the British Consul witnessed her signature. You may remember, Trent, that when the provisions of that will became public after her death, they attracted a good deal of attention. You don't remember? Well, to put it simply, she left two thousand pounds to her brother, Knut Wergeland, of Myklebostad, in Norway, and fifty to her maid, Maria Krogh, also a Norwegian, who had been with her some years. The whole of the rest of her property she left to her brother-in-law unconditionally. That surprised me, because he had disapproved bitterly of the marriage, and he hadn't concealed his opinion. But she said to me that she could think of nobody who would do so much good with her money as her brother-in-law. From that point of view she was justified. Lord Aviemore is said to spend most of his income in charitable work. Anyhow, she made him her heir."

"And what did he say to it?"

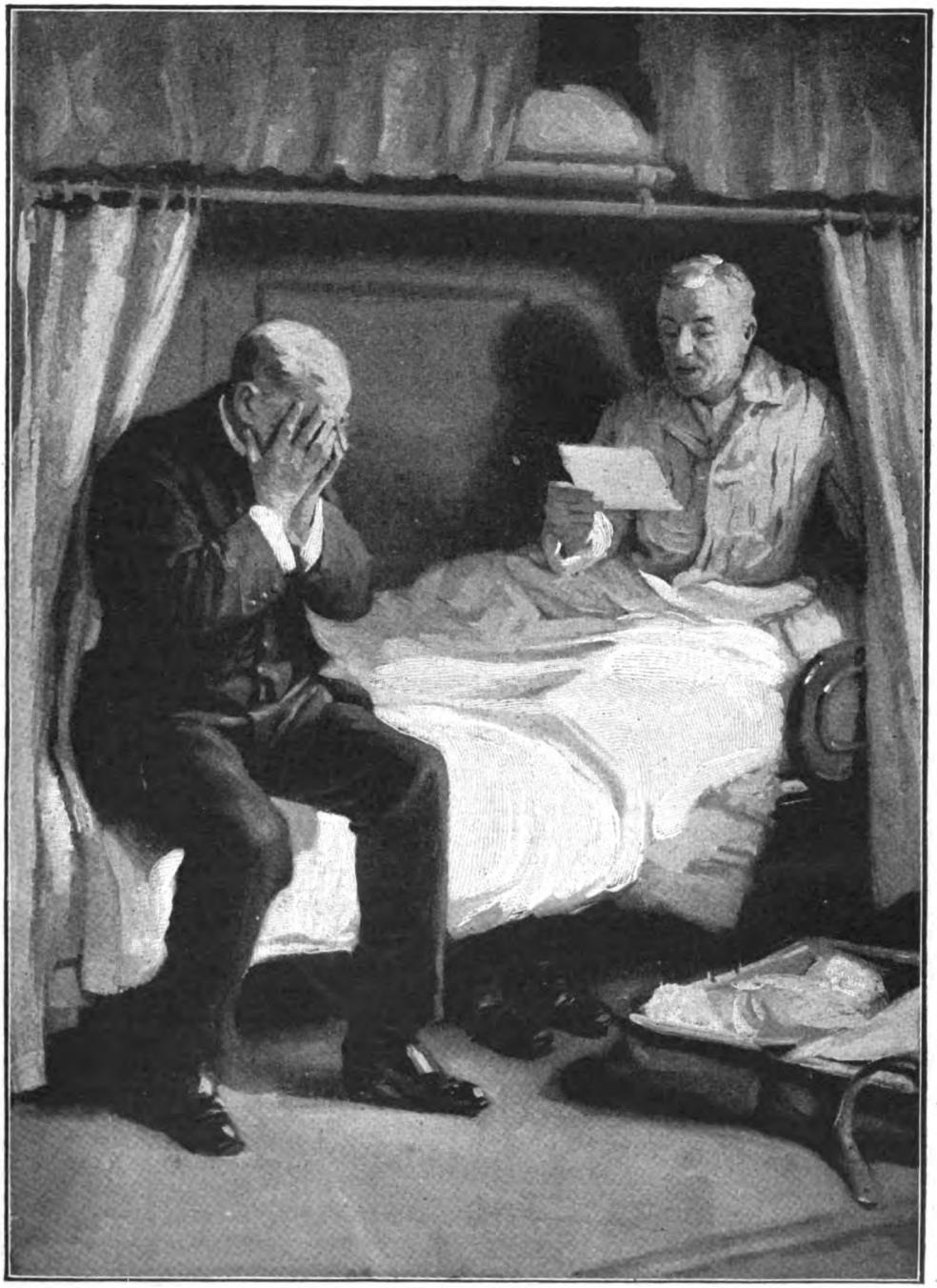
Selby coughed. "There is no evidence that he knew anything about it before her death. No evidence," he repeated, slowly. "But now let me get on with my story. Lady Aviemore asked me to remain to transact business for her until she should leave Taormina. This she did at last on March 30th, accompanied by Lord Aviemore, myself, and her maid. To shorten the railway journey, as she told us, she planned to go by boat first to Brindisi, then to Venice, and from Venice home by rail. The boats from Brindisi to Venice all go in the day-time, except once a week, when a boat from Corfu arrives in the evening, and goes on about eleven. It happened we could get across from Taormina in time to catch that boat, and Lady Aviemore decided to go by it. We had a few hours in Brindisi, dined there, and about ten o'clock went on board. Lady Aviemore complained of a headache. She went at once to her cabin, which was a deck-cabin, asking me to send someone to collect her ticket at once, as she wanted to sleep as soon as possible, and not to be awakened again. That was done. Shortly before the boat left the maid came to me and told me her mistress was then lying down, and had said she wished to be called at half-past seven in the morning. The maid then went to her own cabin in the second class. Soon after we were out of the harbour I turned in myself. At that time Lord Aviemore was still up. He was leaning over the rail on the promenade deck, upon which Lady Aviemore's cabin opened, and at some distance from the cabin. His own was on the other side of the same deck. I think only two or three other people still remained on the deck, looking out over the sea. It was beginning to blow. I thought we should very likely have some bad weather in an hour or two, and so it turned out. It didn't trouble me, however, and I slept very well.

"It was a quarter to eight when Lord Aviemore woke me by coming into the cabin. He was pale and agitated. He told me that his sister-in-law could not be found, that the maid had gone to her cabin at half-past seven and found it empty!

"I got up in a hurry and went to the cabin. The dressing-case Lady Aviemore had taken with her was there, and her small velvet bag lay on the bed, with her fur coat. Her purse, full of notes and silver, and her jewel-case were on the table, and by them lay a note, folded up, but without address, which you can see presently. To make a long story short, she had disappeared in the night, and there is not the slightest doubt that she found her grave in the Adriatic. The body was never recovered."

Selby paused, and unlocked a drawer in the table before him. He took out a lady's black velvet bag and a folded sheet of thin ruled paper.

"It was Lord Aviemore," he said, "who found this note in the cabin, and was the first to read it. While I read it, he sat on the cabin-bed with his face in his hands. All through what followed—the official inquiries and so forth—he seemed scarcely awake to what was happening, and I had to do most of the talking. When I had brought him back to London, the firm wrote telling



"WHILE I READ IT, HE SAT ON THE CABIN-BED WITH HIS FACE IN HIS HANDS."

h'm about the will, which I had not mentioned to him for fear of upsetting him yet more during the journey. Later on, when I saw him about the disposal of Lady Aviemore's personal effects and valuables, I mentioned that there was a handkerchief-bag with a few trifles in it. 'Give it away,' he said. 'Do what you like with it.' Well, I kept it," said Selby, with an air of slight embarrassment, "as a sort of

memento. And I kept the note too. Here it is."

Selby ceased, and handed the note to Trent. He read these words, written in a large, firm, rounded hand :—

I have loved more, and been more happy, than is good for anyone. And it was through me that they died. Such an ending to such a marriage as ours has been is far worse than death to me. This is not sorrow that I feel ; it is destruction, absolute ruin. My soul is quite empty. I have been kept up this month past only by the resolution I took on the day when I lost them, by the thought of what I am going to do now. I take my leave of a world I cannot bear any more.

There followed the initials " L. A." Trent read and re-read the pitiful message, so full of the awful egoism of grief. He asked at length, " Is this her usual handwriting ? "

" Except that it seems to have been written with a bad pen it is just like her usual writing. But now listen, Trent. I asked you here to-day because of your reputation for getting at the truth of things. Soon after the suicide I got an idea into my head, and I have puzzled over these relics of Lady Aviemore a good many times without much result. I did find out a fact or two, though ; and it struck me that if I could discover something, you would probably do much better."

Trent, studying the paper, ignored this tribute. " Well," he said, finally, " what is your idea ? "

" I'd rather not state it, Trent. But I can tell you a fact or two, as I said. That sheet, as you see, is a sheet torn from an ordinary ruled writing-pad. Now here is a point. I have taken that sheet to a friend of mine who is in the paper business. He has told me that it is a make of paper never sold in Europe at all, but sold a good deal in Canada. Next, Lady Aviemore never was in Canada. And the pad from which the sheet was torn was not in her dressing-case or anywhere in the cabin. Nor was there any pen and ink there, or any fountain-pen. The ink, you see, is a nasty-looking grey ink."

" Continental hotel ink, in fact. She wrote it in the hotel, then, with an hotel pen. But not on hotel paper. Yes, I see," remarked Trent, gazing at the other thoughtfully. " And the other things ? " he inquired, suddenly.

" Suggest nothing to me," remarked Selby. " But you have a look at them." He turned the little bag out upon the table. " Here you are—handkerchief, powder-box and puff, mirror, nail-file, hair-pins——"

" Of course," Trent murmured, " hair-pins." He took them in his hand. " Four hair-pins—quite new, I should say. Do they tell a story, Selby ? "

" I don't see how. They're just ordinary black hair-pins—as you say, they look into fresh and bright to have been used."

" And that last thing ? "

" This is a box of Ixtil, the anti-seasick stuff. Two doses are gone. I believe it's very good."

" I didn't know," Trent remarked, idly, turning the box about, " that you could buy it abroad."

" I was with Lady Aviemore when she bought it at Brindisi, just before going on board."

" Did she buy anything else ? "

" I really can't tell you," Selby replied, with a touch of pique. Trent seemed to be asking aimless questions while he stared at the capsules in their tiny box. " She went shopping for an hour or so before dinner, but she was alone, and I didn't see her again until she came down to dinner."

" And so you noticed nothing curious at all," mused Trent, " except this about the paper, and the note having been prepared in advance—which is certainly queer enough. Just cast your mind back beyond the last day. All through the time you were with them nothing came under your notice that seemed strange in the circumstances ? "

Selby fingered his chin. " If you put it like that, I can remember a rather funny thing that I never thought of again until now. But I can't see how it could possibly——"

" Yes, I know. But you asked me here to consider the case in my own way, didn't you ? "

" You are so jolly professional, Trent," Selby complained. " It was simply this. Two or three days before we left Taormina I was standing in the hotel office when the mail arrived. As I was waiting to see if there was anything for me, the porter put down on the counter a rather smart-looking package that had just come—done up the way they do it at a really first-class shop, if you know what I mean. It looked like a biggish book, or box of chocolates, or something—about twelve inches by ten, at a guess—and it had French stamps on it, but the postmark I didn't notice. And this, I saw, was addressed to Mlle. Maria Krogh, if you please—Lady Aviemore's Norwegian maid, about the plainest and stodgiest-looking girl in the world, I should say. Well, Maria was there waiting, too, and presently the man handed it to her. She showed no surprise, but went

"HE TURNED THE LITTLE BAG OUT UPON THE TABLE. 'HERE YOU ARE—HANDKERCHIEF, POWDER-BOX AND PUFF, MIRROR, NAIL-FILE, HAIR-PINS——'"

off with it, and just then her mistress came down the big stairs. She saw the parcel, and just held out her hand for it as if it was a matter of course ; and Maria handed it over in the same way, and the Countess went upstairs with it. But her name wasn't on the parcel, that I'll swear ; and Maria hadn't even cut the string. I thought it was quaint, but I forgot it almost at once, because Lady Aviemore decided that evening to leave the place, and I had plenty to attend to. And if you want to know," added Selby, with a hint of irritation, as Trent opened his lips to speak, " where Maria Krogh is, all I can tell you is that I took her ticket for her in London to Christiansand, where her home is, because she was too much upset to do things for herself ; and I never thought of her again until we sent her the fifty pounds that was left her, which she acknowledged. Now, then ! "

Trent laughed at the solicitor's tone, and Selby laughed also. His friend walked to the fireplace and pensively adjusted his tie. " Well, I must be off," he announced, suddenly. " What do you say to dining with me on Friday ? If by that time I've anything to suggest about this thing, I will tell you then. You will ? That's splendid." And he hastened away.

But on Friday Trent seemed to have nothing to suggest. He was so reluctant to approach the subject that Selby supposed him to be chagrined at his failure to accomplish anything, and did not press the matter.

It was some months later, on a day in September, that Trent walked up the valley road at Myklebostad, looking farewell at the mountain at the end of the valley, the white-capped father of the torrent that roared down a twenty-foot fall beside him. He had been a week at this most remote backwater of Europe, three hours by steamer from the nearest place that ranked as a town, and with full sixty miles of rugged hills between him and a railway station. The savage beauty of that watery landscape, where sun and rain worked together daily to achieve an unearthly purity in the scene, had justified far better than he had hoped his story that he had come there in search of matter for his brush. He had painted busily while the light lasted, and he had learned in the evenings as much as he could of his neighbours. It was little enough, for the postmaster, in whose cottage he had a room, spoke only an indifferent German ; and no one else, so far as he could discover, had anything but Norwegian, of which Trent knew scarcely a

dozen traveller's phrases. But he had seen, he thought, every man, woman, and child in the valley, and he had closely attended to the household of Knut Wergeland, the rich man of the place, who had the largest farm. He and his wife, both elderly and grim-faced peasants, lived with two servants in an old turf-roofed steading. Not another person, Trent was certain, inhabited the house. They had two sons, he learned, in America.

He had decided at length that his voyage of curiosity to Myklebostad had been ill-inspired. Knut and his wife were no more than a thrifty peasant pair. They had given him a meal at their house one day when he was sketching near the place, and they had refused with gentle firmness to take any payment. Both produced upon him an impression of illimitable trustworthiness and competency in the life they led so utterly out of the world.

That day, as Trent gazed up to the mountain, his eye was caught by a flash of the sunlight against the dense growth of birches that ran from bottom to top of the precipitous height that was the valley wall to his left.

It was a bright blink, about half a mile from where he stood; it remained steady, and at several points above and below he saw the same bright appearance. Considering it, he perceived that there must be a wire somehow led up the steep hill-face, among the trees. A merely idle curiosity drew his steps towards the spot on the road whence the wire seemed to be taken upwards. In a few minutes he came to the opening among the trees of a rough track leading upwards among rocks and roots, at such an angle that only a vigorous climber could attempt it. Close by, in the edge of the thicket, stood a tall post, from the top of which a bright wire stretched upwards through the branches in the same direction as the path.

Trent slapped the post with a sounding blow.

"Heavens and earth!" he exclaimed. "I had forgotten the *sæter!*"

At once he began to climb.

A thick carpet of rich pasture began where the deep birch-belt ended at the top of the height. It stretched away for miles over a gently-sloping upland. As Trent came into the open, panting, after a strenuous forty-minute climb, the heads of a few browsing cattle were sleepily turned towards him. Beyond them wandered many more, and a hundred yards away stood a tiny wooden hut, turf-roofed. This plateau was the *sæter*, a thing of which Trent had read in some guide-book, and never thought since; the high grass-land attached to some valley farm. The wire he had seen was stretched from bottom to top, the fall being very steep, so that the bales of the hay-crop could be slid down to the valley without carrying. At the summer's end, cows were led by an easier *détour* to the uplands, there to remain grazing for six weeks or more, attended by some robust peasant-woman who lived solitary with the herd.

And there, at the side of the hut, bending over a rough table, a woman stood. Trent, as he slowly approached, noted her short, rough skirt and coarse, sack-like upper garment, her thick grey stockings and clumsy clogs. About her bare head her pale gold hair was fastened in tight plaits. As she looked up on hearing Trent's footfall, two heavy silver ear-rings dangled about the tanned and toil-worn face of this very type of the middle-aged peasant-woman of the region.

She ceased her task of scraping a large cake of chocolate into a bowl, and straightened her tall body; smiling, with her lean hands on her hips, she spoke in Norwegian, greeting him.

Trent made the proper reply. "And that," he added, in English, "is almost all of the language I know. Perhaps, madam, you speak English?"

Her light blue eyes looked puzzlement, and she spoke again in Norwegian, pointing downward to the valley. He nodded, and she began to talk pleasantly in her unknown tongue. From within the hut she brought two thick mugs; she pointed rapidly to the chocolate in the bowl, to himself and herself, then downward again to the village.

"I should like it of all things," he said; "you are most kind and hospitable, like all your people. What a pity it is we have no language in common!" She brought him a stool and gave him the chocolate cake and a knife, making signs that he should continue the scraping; then within the hut she kindled a fire of twigs, and began to boil water in a black pot. Plainly it was her dwelling, the roughest Trent had ever seen. On two small shelves against the rough planks of the wall were ranged a few pieces of earthenware, coarse and chipped, but clean. A wooden bed-place, with straw and two neatly-folded blankets, filled a third of the space of the hut. All the carpentering was of the rudest. From a small chest in a corner she drew a biscuit-tin, half-full of flat cakes of stale bread.

"SMILING, WITH HER HANDS ON HER HIPS, SHE SPOKE IN NORWEGIAN, GREETING HIM."

There seemed to be nothing else in the tiny place save a heap of twigs for firing.

She made chocolate in the two mugs, and then, on Trent's insistence, sat upon the only stool at the little table outside the hut, while he made a seat of an upturned milk-pail. She continued to talk amiably, while he finished with difficulty one of the bread-cakes.

"I believe," he said, at last, setting down his empty mug, "you are talking merely

to hear the sound of your own voice, madam. It is excusable in you. You don't understand English, so I will tell you to your face it is a most beautiful voice. I should say," he went on, thoughtfully, "that you ought, with training, to have been one of the greatest soprano singers who ever lived."

She heard him calmly, and shook her head, as not understanding.

"Well, don't say I didn't break it gently," Trent protested. He rose to his feet. "Madam, I know that you are Lady Aviemore. I have broken in upon your solitude, and I ask your pardon for that; but I could not be sure unless I saw you. I give you my word that no one knows, and no one shall know from me, what I know."

He made as if to return by the way he came. But the woman held up her hand. A singular change had come over her brown face. An open and lively spirit now looked out of her desolate blue eyes, and she smiled another and much more intelligent smile. After a few minutes she spoke in English, fluent but quaintly pronounced. "Sir," she said, "you have behaved very nicely up till now. It has been amusing for me; there is not much comedy on the *sæter*. Now will you have the goodness to explain?"

He told her in a few words that he had suspected she was still alive; that he had thought over the facts which had come to his knowledge; and that he had been led to think she was probably in that place. "I thought you might guess that I had recognized you," he added. "So it seemed best to assure you that your secret was safe. Was it wrong to speak?"

She shook her head, gazing at him with her chin on her hand. Presently she said, "I think you are not against me. But I do not understand why you kept my secret from others when you had found it out."

"I sought for it because I am curious," he answered. "I kept it, and I will always keep it, because—oh, well! because to me Lillemor Wergeland is a sort of divinity."

She laughed suddenly. "Incense! And I in these rags, in this place, with what I can see in this little spotty piece of cheap looking-glass! Ah, well! You have come a long way, Monsieur le Curieux, and it would be a cruelty not to confide in you. After all, it was simple.

"It was only a day or two after the disaster that the resolve came to me. I never hesitated a moment. It was through me that they were in that place—you have heard that? I felt I must leave the world I knew, and that knew me. Suicide never occurred to me—what is there more contemptible? As for a convent, unhappily there is none for people with minds like mine. I meant simply to disappear, and the only way to succeed was to get the reputation of being dead. I thought it out for some days and nights. Then I wrote, in the name of my maid, to an establishment in Paris where I used to buy things for the stage. I sent money, and ordered a dark brown transformation—that is a lady's word for a wig—some stuff for darkening the skin, various pigments and pencils, *et tout le bazar*. My maid did not know what I had sent for; she only handed the parcel to me when it arrived. She would have thrown herself in the fire for me, I think, my maid Maria. The day the things came I announced that I would return home by the route you know."

"Then it was as I guessed!" Trent exclaimed. "You disguised yourself on the steamer at Brindisi, and slipped off in the dark before it started."

"I was no such imbecile, indeed," returned the lady, with a hint of sharpness. "How if my absence had been discovered somehow before the starting? That could happen; and then what? No; when we reached Brindisi from Taormina, I knew we had some hours there. I put on a thick veil and went out alone. At the office by the harbour I took a second-class berth for myself, Miss Julia Simms, travelling from Brindisi to Venice. I found the boat was already alongside the quay. Then I went into the poorer streets of the town and bought some clothes, very ugly ones, some shoes, some cheap toilet things——"

"Some black hair-pins," murmured Trent.

"Naturally, black," she assented. She looked at him inquiringly, then resumed. "I bought also a melancholy little cheap portmanteau-thing, and put my purchases in it. I took it on a cab to the harbour, and gave one of the ship's stewards a *lira* to put it in Miss Simms's cabin to await her. After that I bought two other things, a long mackintosh coat and a funny little cap, the very things for Miss Simms, and at the hotel I pushed them under the things my maid had already packed in my dressing-case. On the steamer, when I was locked in my cabin without danger of disturbance, I took off my fur coat, I arranged a dark, rather catty sort of face for myself, and fitted on Miss Simms's hair. I put on her mackintosh and cap. When the boat began to move away from the quay, and people

on deck were looking over the rail, I just stepped out of my cabin, shut the door, and walked straight to Miss Simms's berth at the other end of the ship. There is not much more to say. When we reached Venice I did not look for the others, and I never saw them. I went straight on to Paris, and wrote to my brother Knut that I was alive, and told him just what I meant to do if he would help me. Such things do not seem so mad to a true child of Norway."

"What things?" Trent asked.

"Things of deep sorrow, malady of soul, escape from the world. He and his wife have been true and good to me. I am supposed to be her cousin, Hilda Björnstad. I left them money, more than enough to pay for me, but they did not know that when they welcomed me here."

She ceased, and smiled vaguely at Trent, who was considering her tale with eyes that gazed fixedly at the sky-line. "Yes, of course," he remarked, presently, in an abstracted manner. "That was it. So simple! And now may I tell you," he went on, with a sudden change of tone, "one or two details you have forgotten?

"At Brindisi you bought, just before going on the boat, a box of the stuff called Ixtil, to prevent sea-sickness. You took a dose before going on board and another just after, as the directions prescribed. Then, as Mr. Selby happened to know you had it, you thought it best to leave it behind when you vanished. Also you left behind you, in your hurry, four black hair-pins, quite new, which had somehow, I suppose, got loose inside your little bag, and which were found there by Selby. You see, Lady Aviemore, it was Selby who brought me into this. He told me all the facts he knew. And he showed me the velvet bag and its contents. But he did not attach any importance to the two things I have just mentioned."

Lady Aviemore raised her eyebrows perceptibly. "I cannot see why he should. And I cannot see why he should bring in anybody."

"Because he had some vague idea of your brother-in-law having caused your death, or, at any rate, having known your intention to commit suicide. He never said it outright, but it was plain that that was in his mind. You see, Lord Aviemore stood to benefit enormously by your death; and then there was the matter of your note announcing your suicide."

"It announced," she remarked, "the truth: that I was leaving a world I could not bear. The words might mean one thing or another. But what of the note?"

"That truthful note," said Trent, "was written with pen and ink, of which there was none in your cabin. It was written on paper which had been torn from a block, and no block was found. Also it was discovered that that particular make of paper is sold in Canada, but has never been sold in Europe. You had never been in Canada. Lord Aviemore had just come back from Canada. You see?"

"But did not Mr. Selby perceive that my brother-in-law is a saint?" inquired the lady, with a touch of impatience. "Surely that was plain! An evident saint!"

"In my slight knowledge of him," admitted Trent, "he struck me in that way. But Selby is a lawyer, and lawyers don't understand saints. Besides, Lord Aviemore disliked him, I fancy, and perhaps he felt the same way about Lord Aviemore."

"It is true he did not approve of Mr. Selby, because he disliked all men who were smart and worldly. But now I will tell you. That evening in the hotel at Brindisi I wanted to write the note, and I asked my brother-in-law for a sheet from a block he had in his hand and was about to write upon. That is all. I wrote it in the hotel writing-room, and took it afterwards in my bag to the cabin."

"We supposed you had written it beforehand," Trent observed, "and that was one of the things that led me to feel morally certain that you were still alive. I'll explain. If, as we thought, you had written the note in the hotel, your suicide was a premeditated act. Yet Selby afterwards saw you buying that medicine, and it was plain that you had taken two doses. Now, it struck me that it was ridiculous for anyone already determined on drowning herself at sea to begin treating herself against sea-sickness. Then there were those new black hair-pins. The sight of them was a revelation to me. They meant disguise. For I knew, of course, that with that hair you had probably never used a dark hair-pin in your life."

The Countess felt at her pale-gold plaits, and gravely extended a black hair-pin. "In the valley we all use them."

"It is very different in the valley, I know," he said, quietly.

The lady regarded her guest with something of respect.

"It still remains," she said, "to explain how you knew it was in Norway, and here, as a poor farm-servant, that I should hide

myself. It seemed to me the last thing in the world—your world—that a woman who had lived my life would be expected to do."

"There was no certainty about it," he answered. "It was a strong possibility, that's all. Your problem, you see, was just what you say—to hide yourself. And you had another, I think. You had to get your living somehow. Everything you possessed—except some small sum in cash, I suppose—you left behind you when you disappeared. Now, a woman cannot very well go on acting and disguising herself for ever. A man can grow hair on his face or shave it off; for a woman, disguise must be a perpetual anxiety. If she has to get employment, and especially if she has no references, it's an impossibility."

She nodded gravely. "That was how I saw it."

"So," he pursued, "it came to this: that Lillemor Wergeland had to come to the surface again somewhere, and in no long time; Lillemor Wergeland, whose type of beauty and general appearance were so marked and unmistakable, and whose photograph had gone all over the world. The fact is that for some time I didn't see how it could possibly have been done. There were only a few countries, I supposed, of which you knew enough of the language to make any attempt to live and work in them. In those countries you would always attract attention by your physical type and your accent; and if you attracted attention, discovery might follow at any moment. The more I thought of it the more difficult it seemed.

"And then the idea came. There was one country in which your looks and speech would not betray you as a foreigner—your own country. And among those corners of the world where Lillemor Wergeland could go with a fair certainty of being unrecognized, the remoter villages of Norway would be. And at Myklebostad, on the Langfjord, which the map told me was thirty miles from the nearest town and sixty from the nearest railway, Lillemor Wergeland had a brother, who was also the richer by two thousand pounds for her supposed death.

"You see, then, how I formed the theory which brought me to this place on a sketching holiday." Trent stood up and gazed across the valley to the sunlit white peaks beyond. "I have visited Norway before, but I have never had such an interesting time. And now, before I return to the haunts of men, let me say again that I shall forget at once all that has happened to-day. Don't think it was a vulgar curiosity that brought me here. There was once a supreme artiste called Lillemor Wergeland, whose gifts made me her debtor and servant. Anything that happened to her touched me; I had a sort of right to go seeking what it really was that had happened."

She stood before him in her coarse and stained clothes, her hands clasped behind her, with a face and attitude of perfect dignity.

"Very well. You stand on your right, and I on mine—to arrange my own life, since I am alone in it. And I will spend it here, where it began. My soul was born here, before it went out to have adventures, and it has crept home again for comfort. Believe me, it is not only as you say, that I am safe from discovery here. That counts very much; but it is the truth that I felt I must go out of the world, and live out my life where it began, in this far-away, lonely place, where everything is humble, and there is no wealth or luxury at all, and the hills and the fjords are severe and grand, just as God made them before there were any men. Some people used to have that impulse, you know, long ago, when something had happened to make them tired of the world, or to stain their souls so that they must go apart and wash their wickedness away. And this, all this is my own, own land! And now," she ended, suddenly, "we understand one another."

She extended her hand, saying, "I do not know your name."

"Why should you?" he asked, bending over it; then went quickly from her. At the beginning of the descent he glanced back once; she waved her hand with a quick gesture.

Half-way down the rugged climb Trent stopped. Far above a wonderful voice was singing to the glory of the Norse land, whose mountains (it sang) not even the storm that should rive the globe itself would be able to shake.

"*Ja! Herligt er mit Fodeland,*
Der ewig trodser Tidens Tand,"

sang the voice.

Trent looked out upon the wild landscape. "Her Fatherland!" he soliloquized. "Well, well! They say the strictest parents have the most devoted children."

LIVING WITH YOUR WIFE— OR YOUR HUSBAND.

By

ARNOLD BENNETT.

Illustrated by Alfred Leete.

EVEN the dimensions of the Imperial Chinese Encyclopædia, which comprises five thousand and twenty volumes, would not suffice for the full treatment of this vast, immortal, and entrancing subject. But happily it can, without too much difficulty, be split up into divisions, sub-divisions, sub-sub-divisions, and so on, and handled piecemeal. Thus: Division—Difficulties. Sub-division—Early difficulties. Sub-sub-division — Major early difficulties. Sub-sub-sub-division—Major early difficulties arising from the moral senses. Sub-sub-sub-sub-division—Major early difficulties arising from the senses of pride and of responsibility for persons other than oneself. I will deal with the last.

These difficulties begin with the first realization that all is not well with one's spouse, and the realization occurs as a rule immediately after the marriage ceremony, and in any case before the wedding-breakfast is over. No man or woman believes that his or her betrothed is perfect. Nevertheless, there is usually a belief that it has pleased Providence in its boundless wisdom to render the chosen one immune from many common defects—for example, from the defects generally supposed to be inherent in the sex to which the chosen one belongs. From such a belief springs the further belief that the observed defects of the chosen one are not really defects in the ordinary meaning of the term, but rather good qualities in disguise, and thence comes the conclusion that the chosen one, though of course not perfect, is practically perfect after all.

The process of reasoning is not

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The observed defects of the Chosen one

He watches his newly-acquired wife

Her chatter was delicious

scientific, and inevitably it must bring disillusion, which means complications. The disillusion is precipitated by the universal instinct to over-estimate that which one desires and to under-estimate that which one has got. See the young husband as he watches his newly-acquired wife enter a friend's drawing-room. His anxiety, which he often inadequately conceals, is touching. Aforetime the entrance of that same young woman into a drawing-room never caused him the slightest apprehension. On the contrary, it filled him with delight and thanksgivings. Then, her imperfections, if she had any, somehow constituted a perfection. If she was taciturn, her silences were beautifully expressive. If she gabbled, the stream of her chatter was delicious. If she was awkward, a secret grace was in her awkwardness. But now that he has got her the vain fellow is intensely afraid lest she may fail to prove to the world the excellence of his taste. Instead of looking for qualities he is looking for defects. Nay, he is searching for them with a microscope. Find them he must, and he does. And he is pained.

The terrible thought shoots through his mind: "It is a human being that I have married!" He had fancied it was a divinity, or at least a super-human being. Then he thinks: "I am morally responsible for this poor human being. It is my duty to improve her, and on her behalf to strive after that perfection which she lacks." And also he thinks: "She is not making the best of herself. She is not putting her best foot foremost. And the public will misesteem her. She means well, but she cannot see herself as I see her; moreover, she falls short of me in knowledge of the world. A few discreet hints will be enough. I will give them at the first convenient opportunity. I ought to give them. Indeed, I am not the man to be made a fool of." The trouble then starts. No matter how tactful the husband, how teachable the wife, the trouble then starts.

I might have changed the respective positions of the husband and wife without in the smallest degree violating the truth. The wife is just as apt to start the trouble as the husband. More often than not they are both simultaneously struck by

the shortcomings of the spouse and by the sacredness of their mission to cure those shortcomings. Without knowing it they form a secret society for mutual improvement, than which nothing can be more dangerous. Hence partly the wide experience that the first year of marriage is the hardest.

But I have yet described only the first and minor disillusion which accompanies marriage. The second is a major disillusion. Men suffer under it more than women. A man is nearly always convinced that the woman to whom he has affianced himself is very unlike other women in certain characteristics. Not that he regards her as unfeminine! Far from that, she is for him the most feminine creature drawing breath. But she has escaped what seem to him the curses of her sex. For instance, she *understands* much better than "ordinary" women. She is interested in things that "ordinary" women are not interested in. And, above all, she will listen to reason. In fact, her intellectual point of view is quite masculine. Briefly, she has the best qualities of both sexes. Well, he soon learns better, or worse. Some trifling incident, perhaps some incident that nobody else notices, and he is staggered by a glimpse of reality. "Good heavens!" he gasps to himself, "she is only a woman after all!" And the misguided simpleton sets about to cure her of her confounded femininity, or, anyhow, to mitigate the evil. After which he is astonished for months together that living with a wife should be so difficult.

I have said that upon this count men suffer more than women. The reason is that women are realists to a much greater extent than men. Men are continually confusing what ought to be with what is. Women may perhaps take indefensible measures to meet the facts of a hard situation, but they do have the superlative merit of looking the facts in the face. They do not, as often as men do, pretend in their secret hearts that things are not what they are. And they usually know that a man is a man. Women, however,

She will listen to reason

She is only a woman after all

Women may take indefensible measures

are not wholly free from the masculine weakness, which, indeed, is a human weakness. And it happens sometimes to a woman to be under the illusion that her chosen one rises above masculinity, and reaches femininity, in his unflinching realism. I once actually witnessed the disillusion of such a woman. She was bicycling with her husband on the proper side of the road. A brewer's dray was approaching them in the opposite direction at a fast trot on the wrong side of the road. The woman, with true feminine realism, swerved off to *her* wrong side into safety. The man said grimly, "I'm on my proper side, and I'm going to stay there," and he kept straight on. He did not say, "If any accident occurs it won't be my fault," but he meant that. No accident did occur—some miracle intervened, I forget what—but the wife's estimate of her husband was fundamentally altered from that moment. She was disillusioned, and it took her years to learn that an illusion once destroyed cannot be reconstructed.

Now the recipe for the solution of the above difficulties may be discovered by meditation upon the obvious truths of existence, such as: Practice is better than precept; or, It is more blessed to learn than to teach. If every man on perceiving a defect in his wife, and every woman on perceiving a defect in her husband, said to himself or herself: "I will cure a defect in my own character or in my own deportment," and philosophically leave the other to take charge of his or her own salvation, five-sixths of the nervous strain of conjugal life would soon disappear. A parent may be morally responsible for a child's bearing and endowments, though the point is very arguable, but it is an error to suppose that a husband is thus responsible for a wife's individuality, or *vice versa*. It is, in fact, a piece of pure conceit to suppose any such thing. And the conceit naturally arouses resentment. Married people, like others, have no love for didacticism in their closest companions. They can observe for themselves, and they do observe, and they are much more apt to pick up wrinkles from observed conduct in the companion than from sermons delivered by the companion.

Further, even at the commencement of the married career they reckon to know a thing or two. To be personal, is it probable, dear lady, that your husband could have reached a stage of development sufficiently high to please your fastidious taste without having acquired an immense knowledge of what is

what? It assuredly is not probable. Your husband is not the malleable infant which your zeal for his improvement assumes. His individuality has been slowly formed, and not without many secret struggles. It will take you almost as many years to comprehend that individuality as it took him to form it, and in the meantime you should handle the delicate machinery with caution. His affectionate attitude towards his own individuality probably is, "A poor thing, but mine own! And not so poor, either!" And also, he is quite possibly saying to himself that he must take *you* in hand and improve *you!* You are shocked! You protest! Of course you do—and rightly.

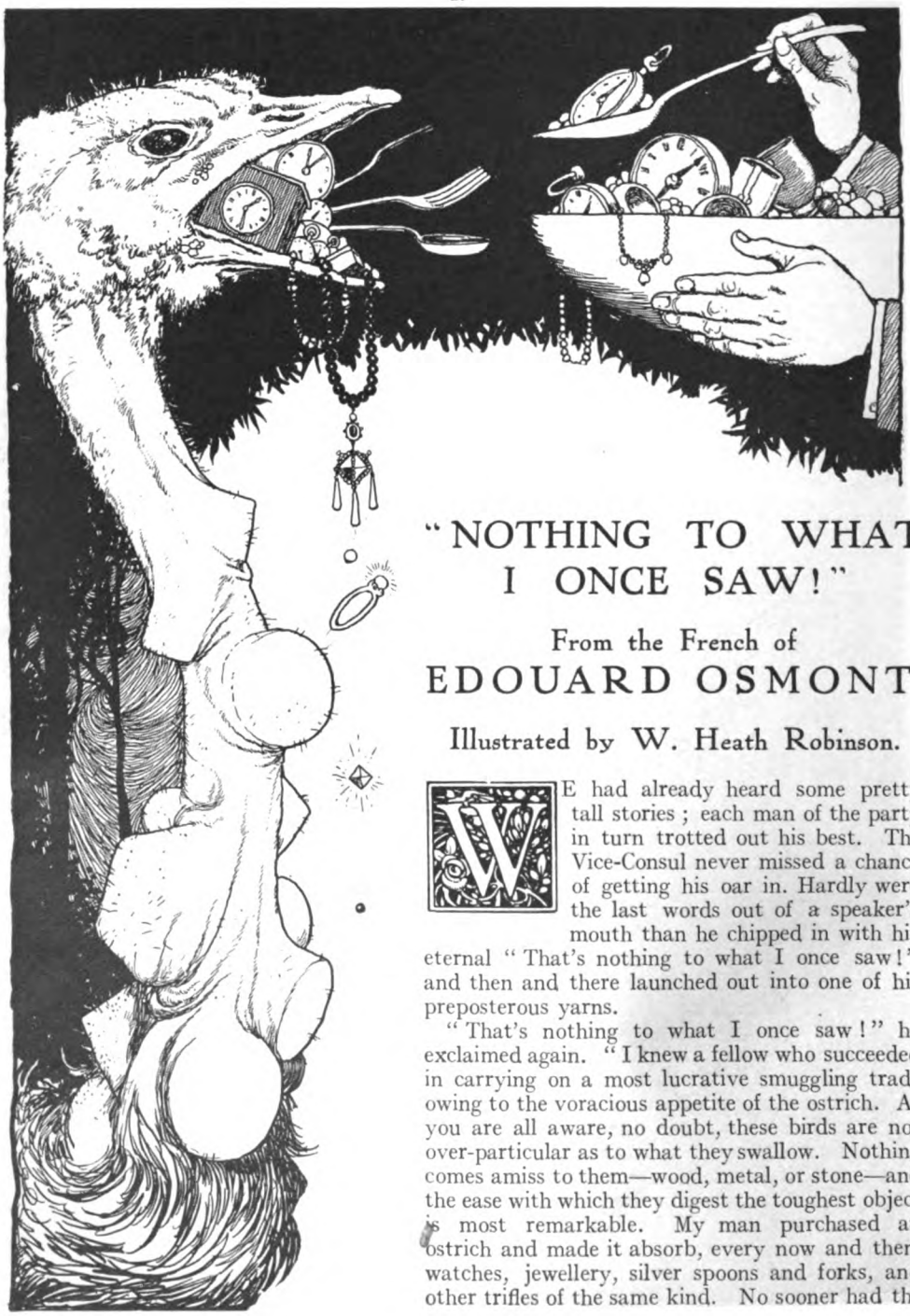
And lest young husbands and wives may too acutely regret that consideration for susceptibilities should prevent the amelioration of the spouse, let it be positively stated that even in the most favourable circumstances very little can be consciously done towards the improvement of an imperfect individuality. The new-born babe is practically unalterable. The grown man or woman, with the profoundest impressions of existence already received, is still less alterable than the babe. The creature exists as a whole. You cannot chip pieces off it, nor add ornamental bits here and there. Life in its entirety may, very slowly, smooth down an ugly protuberance or strengthen a weak muscle. Nothing else will.

Lastly, if the individuality cannot be greatly altered, neither can the public impression made by the individuality be altered. The public—that is, the circle of one's friends—is a very sound judge of the being whom one has married. No effort of any kind will materially change the public's estimate of your taste in consorts, as exemplified in the consort, and so you may as well make up your mind to it. To worry about the impression which your consort is making on the public is a terrible sign of inexperience. And further, the public will never confuse you with your consort, nor, strange to say, will it hold you morally responsible for the vagaries of your consort. And as, unlike you, the public has not in the past been under any illusions about your consort, so it will be less liable than you to the sin of hypercriticism and under-estimation.

In fine, if you look after one end of the see-saw, and leave your consort to look after the other, existence will be considerably more felicitous than if you are always jumping about in the impossible attempt to be in two skins at once.

STORIES FROM THE FRENCH HUMORISTS.

I.



"NOTHING TO WHAT I ONCE SAW!"

From the French of

EDOUARD OSMONT.

Illustrated by W. Heath Robinson.

WE had already heard some pretty tall stories ; each man of the party in turn trotted out his best. The Vice-Consul never missed a chance of getting his oar in. Hardly were the last words out of a speaker's mouth than he chipped in with his eternal "That's nothing to what I once saw!" and then and there launched out into one of his preposterous yarns.

"That's nothing to what I once saw!" he exclaimed again. "I knew a fellow who succeeded in carrying on a most lucrative smuggling trade owing to the voracious appetite of the ostrich. As you are all aware, no doubt, these birds are not over-particular as to what they swallow. Nothing comes amiss to them—wood, metal, or stone—and the ease with which they digest the toughest object is most remarkable. My man purchased an ostrich and made it absorb, every now and then, watches, jewellery, silver spoons and forks, and other trifles of the same kind. No sooner had the

creature as much ballast on board as it could carry than he hurried with it to the nearest Custom-house, and explained in the most innocent manner that he was taking the bird to some neighbouring zoological gardens. The moment he was safely over the frontier he gave his two-footed companion a playful dig in the ribs.

"'Now then, dearie, clear the goods.'

"The ostrich had evidently entered into the spirit of the thing, and on every occasion, like a cow chewing the cud, restored, faithfully and intact, clockwork, jewellery, or cutlery, down to the smallest egg spoon.

"The poor devil got bowled out at last, though. One day he stuffed his ostrich with a whole cargo of alarum-clocks—a new invention that made a terrific din when they went off. For some reason or other the manufacturer had wound them all up, and, as ill-luck would have it, at the very moment when the bird's master was delivering his little speech in his breeziest manner to the Custom-house men, a deafening jingle of bells started somewhere inside the bird. The noise was enough to waken the dead.

"'Dearie' completely lost her head, which is not surprising. This was a novelty she was utterly unprepared for. The poor thing was so perturbed that she cleared the goods on the spot, without waiting for the usual invitation. The Customs men had in front of them a pile of nearly three dozen alarum-clocks ringing away for all they were worth! To say they were astounded is to put it mildly."

Stony silence greeted the end of this story. We all felt that the Vice-Consul was exceeding the limit with these inventions of his.

Professor Tournemolle broke the tension. He had not yet opened his mouth during the evening.

"Look here, Vice-Consul, that little story of yours is surprising enough in its way, but you must allow me to tell you that it is nothing compared to an experience I once had.

"Something like twenty years ago I was touring the world's music-halls with a troupe of a dozen kangaroos. I had worked right through Central Europe to the Balkan regions, then, as now, very ill-provided with railways. The only method of travelling was by caravan, and I made my way in this fashion from one small town to another, picking up the best living I could. Just as I was thinking of crossing the Roumanian frontier, some considerate person kindly warned me that the Bucharest Government had recently imposed almost prohibitive duties on the import of cattle of every kind, and that very likely I might be forced to pay something pretty stiff before I would be allowed to take my little troupe into the country. Of course I protested that it was utterly ridiculous to class kangaroos as cattle. My informant refused to argue this point, but he emphatically repeated his warning to be on my guard.

"As you can imagine, the prospect of having to shell out a big sum of money in this unexpected manner worried me in no small degree. I turned the matter over and over in my head and thought hard of a scheme to evade payment, but no inspiration came to me. Then suddenly, during one of our daily rehearsals, as I was looking at my twelve kangaroos drawn up in a line, in order of size, a luminous idea flashed across my brain. How was it I had not thought of it before?

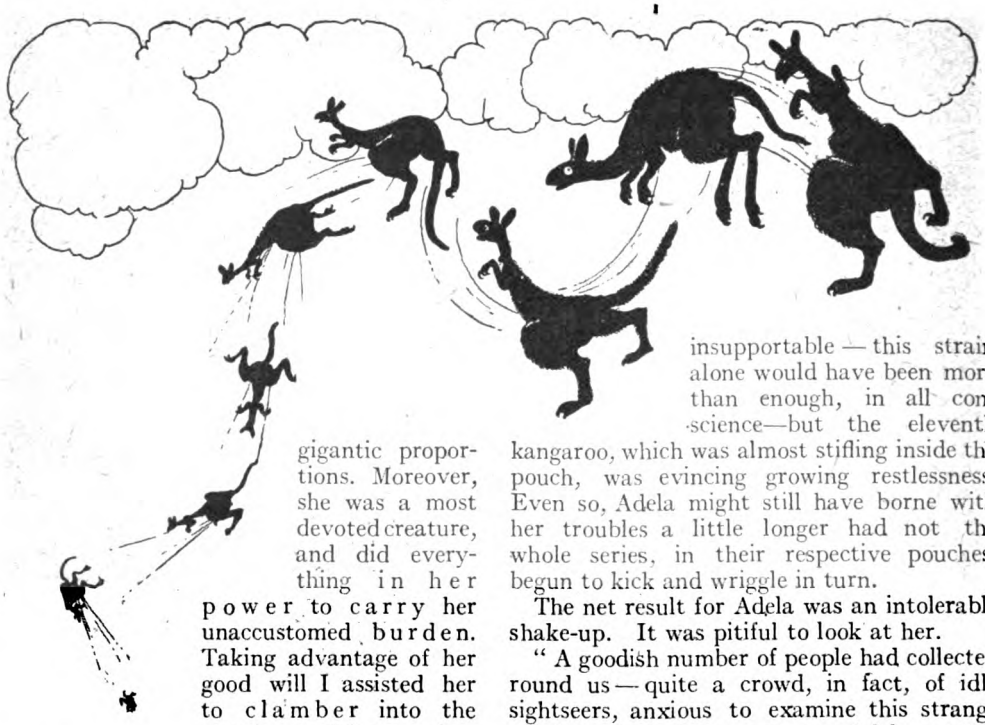
"I need not tell any of you gentlemen that the female kangaroo has a pocket or pouch in which she carries her small offspring, and each of my animals belonged to the fair sex. I had selected females purposely, as the male kangaroo is not always reliable, and is refractory to training.

"I lost no time in putting my idea to a practical test. Grabbing the smallest animal by the scruff of the neck, I began to shove it inside the pocket of its neighbour. The operation was a little troublesome, certainly, but I managed it all right. The second kangaroo, though now increased in bulk, was not very perceptibly larger than before. You can hardly realize how elastic the abdominal walls of these marsupials are.

"So satisfactory a result was encouraging, and I followed it up by inserting the second kangaroo in the pouch of the third. This, I admit, was rather more difficult. The third animal, thus burdened by its two companions, certainly looked larger than before, but the difference was by no means so noticeable as you would expect.

"I forthwith pushed the third kangaroo into the pouch of the fourth, and, without dwelling unnecessarily on the increasing difficulty of each successive introduction, I so proceeded until, after a really painful struggle, I succeeded in forcing the eleventh into the twelfth. Before I got everything shipshape I confess I had to sit down on the top of the heap. They were then encased one inside the other, like a dozen boxes in a Chinese puzzle.

"Fortunately the last kangaroo, whom I had christened Adela, was a beast of really



gigantic proportions. Moreover, she was a most devoted creature, and did everything in her power to carry her unaccustomed burden. Taking advantage of her good will I assisted her to clamber into the caravan, and lost no time in driving to the Roumanian Custom-house. To all appearance I was accompanied by a single kangaroo.

"The Customs' officials were the most troublesome I have ever encountered. To rummage at their ease in every corner of the vehicle, they insisted that the animal should get out. A moment later I noticed, to my dismay, that Adela was exhibiting unmistakable signs of distress. The poor thing, you must remember, was not merely carrying a dead weight, which was well-nigh insupportable — this strain alone would have been more than enough, in all conscience—but the eleventh kangaroo, which was almost stifling inside the pouch, was evincing growing restlessness. Even so, Adela might still have borne with her troubles a little longer had not the whole series, in their respective pouches, begun to kick and wriggle in turn.

The net result for Adela was an intolerable shake-up. It was pitiful to look at her.

"A goodish number of people had collected round us — quite a crowd, in fact, of idle sightseers, anxious to examine this strange quadruped at close quarters. Adela got the impression that she was in the presence of one of her usual audiences. I fixed upon her the severe look I reserved for special occasions, clicked with my tongue, and made mysterious passes with my little cane. And, all the time on tenterhooks, I wondered how much longer those confounded men would remain in the van.

"At last they reappeared, and I was curtly informed that I might take myself and my belongings away. Alas! Deliverance had come too late! Adela's strength was completely spent.

"Suddenly something seemed to snap.

"Like a jack-in-the-box, the eleventh kangaroo shot up into the air, and came down a few paces farther on.

"The Customs' officials

"FROM THE CROWD CAME CRIES OF STUPEFACTION."

stood motionless as though petrified. From the crowd came cries of stupefaction. Scarcely had the animal touched the ground before the tenth kangaroo appeared in its turn, then the ninth, the eighth, and so down the line, until finally little number one rolled out like a ball.

"In less than five seconds, all told, there were my twelve kangaroos, in a row, squatting on their haunches, delightedly inhaling the pure air and making joyful movements with their front paws.

"Half the people in the crowd had taken to their heels, terror-stricken. The rest remained rooted to the spot, eyes and mouth wide open, evidently in doubt whether they were the victims of some illusion, or whether they were witnessing a specially clever bit of juggling. As for me, whistling to my little troupe, I skedaddled for all I was worth, without waiting for developments."

The Vice-Consul had been exhibiting for some moments growing symptoms of uneasiness. When the narrative came to a close he put forth an observation :—

"You have wonderful imagination, Professor."

"Not at all, not at all. I am merely recalling old memories."

"You don't mean to say that you expect us to believe that your story is literally true ?"

"My dear fellow, I give you my word of honour that my little story of the Custom-house is every bit as true as yours, and as all the others you previously told us. Besides, your doubt can be easily settled. Do you know whom I saw that very day in the court of the hotel where I put up with my little troupe ?"

"No. I give it up."

"None other than your man with the ostrich. He was actually making his 'dearie' 'clear the goods.' I suppose you will admit that he is a witness whose testimony you can hardly dispute ?"

The Vice-Consul did not seem anxious to prolong the conversation.

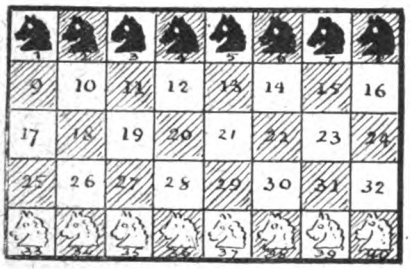
We propose to publish in subsequent numbers a selection of French short stories, containing the characteristic work of the French humorous writers of our time. This story, the first of the series, was selected by the eminent French Academician, M. Emile Richepin, poet, dramatist, and novelist, as one of the best and most characteristic of modern French "contes" of its kind.

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

322.—EXCHANGING THE KNIGHTS.

USING only the upper five rows of a chessboard, place knights in the positions shown in the illustration.



I need hardly remind the reader that it is convenient to use the pawns as knights. The puzzle is to make the White knights change places with the Black ones, moving them a single move at a time, alternately White and Black, and without any knight ever attacking one of the opposite colour. The squares are numbered for convenience in giving the solution.

323.—DONKEY-RIDING.

WHEN the Robinsons were at the seaside with their two children, Harry and Ethel insisted on having a donkey-race over the mile course. Mr. Robinson and some friends acted as judges, but, as the donkeys were familiar friends and declined to part company the whole way, a dead-heat was unavoidable. However, the judges, being stationed at different points on the course, which was marked off in quarter miles, noted the following results: The first three-quarters were run in six and three-quarter minutes, the first half mile took the same time as the second half, and the third quarter was run in exactly the same time as the last quarter. From these results Mr. Robinson amused himself in discovering just how long it took those two donkeys to run the whole mile. Can you figure it out?

324.—DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

A CERTAIN person, having to pay very high war prices, bought a quantity of beef at two shillings a pound and the same quantity of sausages at eighteenpence a pound, when it was pointed out that if he had divided the same money equally between beef and sausages he would have gained two pounds in the total weight. Can you say exactly how much he spent?

325.—A QUEER WORD.

WHAT English word in common use will describe a person or thing as not to be found in any place whatever, and yet, with no other alteration than a mere space between the syllables, will correctly describe that person or thing as being actually present at this very moment?

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

317.—NINE-LETTER PUZZLE.

HERE is an arrangement that gives as many as thirteen words, if you admit the contraction 'TIS, or twelve without. The words are GET, TEG, SUP, PUS, PAT, TAP, GAS, SAG, PIG, GIP, SIT, 'TIS, AIA. The last word, AIA, is a Brazilian bird.

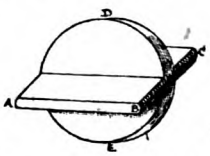
G	E	T
A	I	A
S	U	P

318.—THE AMUSEMENTS TAX.

THERE must have been seventy-two persons in the shilling seats, eighteen persons in the sixpenny seats, eighteen persons in the fourpenny seats, and thirty-six in the threepenny seats.

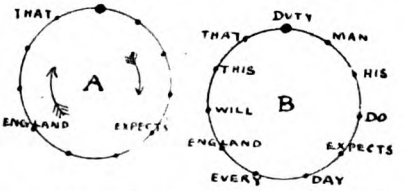
319.—THE SQUARE, CROSS, AND CIRCLE.

THE illustration will show how the block should be cut so that it will exactly fit all three holes and pass through them all. The edges A, B, and C are curved, so in fitting the square hole you push the block half-way through up to the points A and B. The thickness of the gauge in which the holes were cut was not given, so the point may be ignored. In filling the cross-shaped hole, push the block half-way through up to the points D and E.



320.—THE NELSON PUZZLE.

MARK off eleven points on a circle, as in Diagram A. Start from the point at the top and spell out E-n-g-l-a-n-d, touching one of the points round the circle at each letter. When you have come to the end



of the word, write "England" against the *next* point. Starting from the next point, spell out e-x-p-e-c-t-s, and write it against the next point. Then spell out t-h-a-t, only note that you must skip the point "England," because that card has been played out. If you proceed thus, always going round in the same direction, and skipping the points that have been occupied, you will get Diagram B. The required order of the cards is read round the circle, "Duty man his do expects day every England will this that," "duty" being at the top of the pack and "that" at the bottom.

321.—NUMBERED CHARADE.

THE word is ENGLAND

MR. CHAS. GRAVE.

THE PICTORIAL JESTS OF CHAS. GRAVE.

KHAKI happens to be Mr. Grave's wear at the moment, but motley is his true uniform. It will be a welcome day to many admirers when he is able to resume the latter, though we do not doubt that the former fits him not less dashingly and well.

It is by a happy coincidence with his name that a subtle note of gravity underlies this artist's humour. He has the gift of drawing his pictures with a straight face. Possessing a keen eye for character, and the gift of rendering the latter on paper, he leaves us to seize for ourselves the humour of the situation depicted. He makes the point of his jest so sharp and incisive that he is free of the tedious obligation to hammer it home. Nothing could be crisper, neater, snappier than his sketch of the sailor who has been "torpedoed" by a banana-skin, which is an almost ideal example of the *complete* pictorial joke. The whole story is told, as it were, with a single expressive gesture, and one hardly needs the terse comment of the victim printed underneath. It is so precisely what the sailor would exclaim that we can hear him say it for ourselves.

SAILOR (who has slipped on a banana-skin): "Torpedoed, by gum!"

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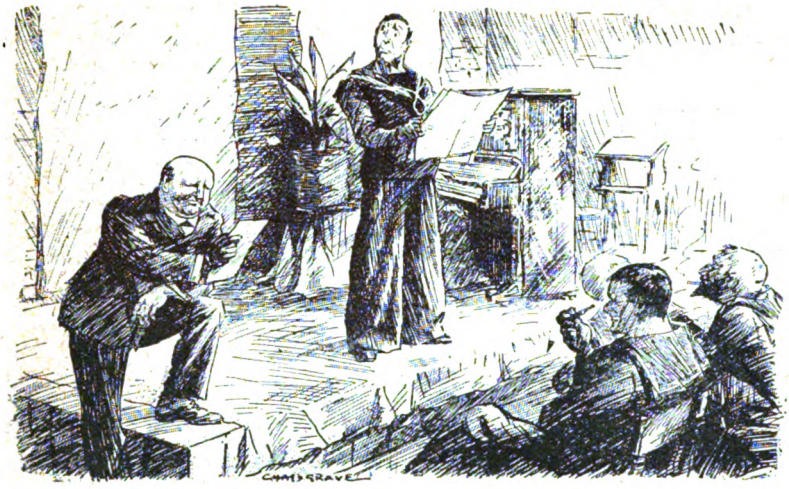
Some of Mr. Grave's best jokes have been at the expense of the Navy and Army, and especially of the former. The bluejacket is a type not readily familiar to those who do not live in dockyard towns or near to naval depots, but Mr. Grave hits him off to the life. As a study in the physiognomy of the lower ratings of the Senior Service, for example, it would be hard to beat the sketch of a lower deck concert. The types are absolutely true to life, not least the bald-headed petty officer who is acting as master of the ceremonies. Everyone who has been much (or even a little) on board His Majesty's ships will recognize that bluff, sturdy figure, the shrewd, genial face, and the smooth, shining expanse of pink scalp. Nor should the acute sense of character in the wording of the M.C.'s announcement be overlooked. There is nothing the Navy will put up with less than pretentiousness in any shape or form: and nothing more effectual than the Navy way of cutting it short. The pride of Hicks, A.B., in his vocal accomplishments



M.C. (introducing bluejacket who fancies himself as a basso) : "Mr. 'Icks will now oblige with several blasts on 'is fog'orn, entitled, 'O, Ruddier than the Cherry.'"

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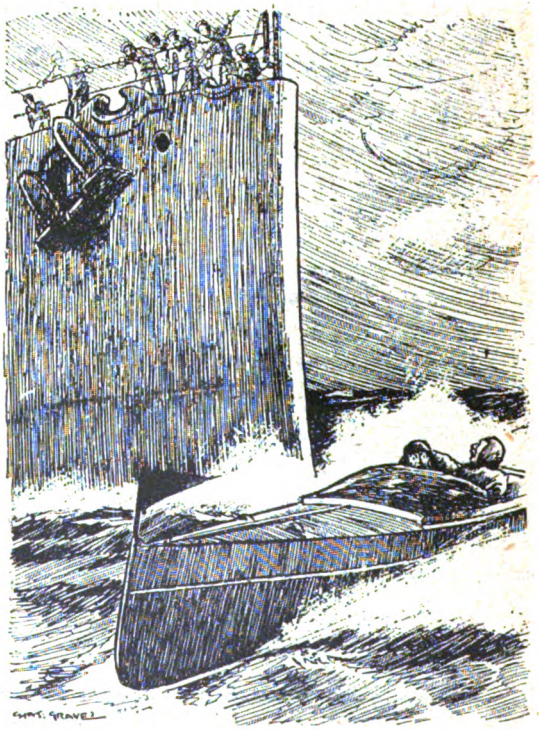
must be proof against all attack if it can hear the latter pleasantly alluded to as "several blasts on 'is fog'orn" without feeling abashed!

The streets of London, or indeed of any city, are prolific of "character," and Chas. Grave is the sort of person who walks about with his eyes open. Like every other humorist, he has found the street urchin or "guttersnipe" irresistible, and many of his most gravely ironical vignettes of street life are founded upon things seen and heard among those invincible optimists, the playmates of the pavement. Inevitably they have more than a touch of pathos, but that serves only to make them ring the more truly, since it is ever the function of real humour to hold the balance poised between laughter and tears. "Come on, Sam; draw stumps!" says the leader of the small party which has been playing "cricket" along the kerbstone. It is only "a figure of speech," but the smile which it draws, as we note the nature of the extemporized wicket, has more than a hint of pity in it.

How well the artist understands the human boy may be seen in the other amusing sketch of slum cricket called "The Old, Old Problem," with its comically realistic rendering of a phase of the game, as played in London parks and such other "open spaces" as include a plot of waste ground, which every observer will recognize. And there is undeniable truth, beneath the humorous exaggeration, in the study of the youthful herdsman, whose truculent charge has "gave up being nasty" since coming into his hands.

To a humorist of Chas. Grave's quiet observation and dry method the solemnity of the Teuton must be an abiding joy. To the English temperament, with that fondness for frivolous mockery which is the guiding principle of the English sense of humour, the German mentality is a constant source of wonderment and delight. We always had some inkling of that mentality, and for years have guyed it mercilessly; but nobody ever suspected the heights (or should



OWNER OF MOTOR-BOAT (to friend) : "Gee! that was a narrow squeak. I guess we scared those fellows some."

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THE OLD, OLD PROBLEM—IS THE BATSMAN OUT OR NOT?
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it be depths?) which the war has shown it to be capable of attaining. Every day brings some new and "priceless" story of the Teuton's

A FIGURE OF SPEECH.
"Come on, Sam; we're going 'ome. Draw stumps."
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lack of humour: there are moments when he seems incredible—almost too good to be true! If it were not that humour is in very truth the "saving grace" of human nature, and that the lack of it, while making the Boche supremely and superbly ludicrous, renders him also an ugly menace to all that civilized humanity holds dear, we could almost find it in our hearts to forgive the evil he has wrought for this intense amusement

THE BULL AND THE BULLY.
VISITOR: "Suppose that bull were to turn nasty, how would you manage him?"
Boy: "'E's gave up being nasty since I 'ad 'im."
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THE NEW ORDER.

ANGLO-PRUSSIAN POLICEMAN (to low-class singing person) : "Stop that noise! A sensitive German musical family resides close by."

[Passed by the Imperial German Censor as typifying the respect in which German Kultur will be held after the conquest of England.]

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he has afforded us. Such a mood, of course, is fleeting, a mere symptom of that instinct to *blaguer*, as the French would call it, which is inherent in our national character. It does not temper, indeed it merely intensifies, the white heat of the nation's indignation. But, being there, it is bound to come out, and it is naturally through the humorists that it finds expression.

The infinite capacity of the German mind for taking itself seriously is neatly hit off in the sketch of the "Anglo-Prussian policeman" nipping in the bud the vocal efforts of the typical English street singer. The scene is one supposedly to be witnessed after the German occupation of this country, with its resulting Teutonization of English institutions. The itinerant street singer is not, perhaps, an institution of which we are particularly proud, and if his abolition by Act of Parliament were in contemplation, probably no great number of voices would be raised in protest. But it is characteristic of our "live-and-let-live" instincts, which the Germans call our lack of scientific method, that no such measure of restriction is ever introduced, or even thought of. Our "sensitive musical families" are not yet sensitive to the point of solemnity!

Mr. Grave does not often appear in the *rôle* of cartoonist, but on occasion he can aim a very well-barbed shaft. The futility of the grandiose Kaiser has been a favourite theme with him, as when he shows him weeping bitterly over the bogging of his precious consignment of Iron Crosses, ten miles from the Front. For coldly contemptuous irony, however, there has perhaps been no more biting cartoon during the war than his sketch of the Kaiser offering his services as a model to an artist. His seedy "bowler" is placed sideways on his head, in pitiful travesty of the historic cocked hat, and his right hand is thrust into the breast of his shabby coat in foolish imitation of the classic pose. "Do you require a model for Napoleon, sir?" asks this sorry scarecrow. "*I can strike the right attitude!*" A pinchbeck Cæsar at the best, poor Wilhelm II. has

THE KAISER SHEDS TEARS AGAIN—THE IRON CROSS WAGON GETS STUCK IN THE MUD (TEN MILES FROM THE FRONT).

FATHER WILLIAM (to artist): "Do you require a model for Napoleon, sir? I can strike the right attitude."

scarcely received a shrewder or more unkind cut than this.

A great charm of Mr. Grave's humour is that his quizzical eye roves very freely about. He never sticks in one groove. He may show occasionally a predilection for blue-jackets or guttersnipes, but his tastes are catholic and all human nature is his field. He delights in the external humours by which eccentric or odd personalities reveal themselves, but he enjoys still more the quaint conceits of character itself. Thus he seizes the obvious humour of such a situation as the application of the stout lady for a dog licence in the name of "Tiny," but is equally alert to the more subtle irony of Sir Margar Ine's taste in literature. This last is a charming example of Mr. Grave's gravity. An artist with less quiet relish for the delicate savour of a jest would scarcely have envisaged the worthy tradesman as solemnly imbibing the wisdom of the Sage of Chelsea with an eye to aphorisms applicable to sardines.

A LOVER OF LITERATURE.

VISITOR (being shown the collection of "rare and choice" bindings): "Ah, I see you read your Carlyle; there are several passages here underlined."

Sir Margar Ine: "Yes; I thought some of them sayin's would make dashed fine ads. for my sardines."

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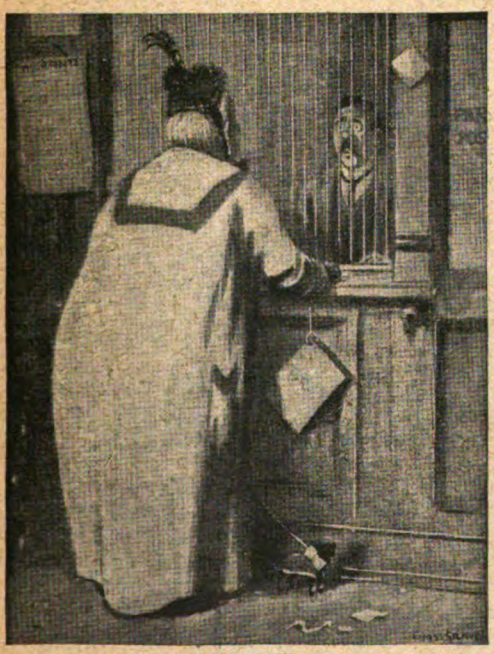

WOW-WOW.

LADY: "Can I get a dog licence here?"
Postmaster: "Yes. What name, please?"
Lady: "Tiny."

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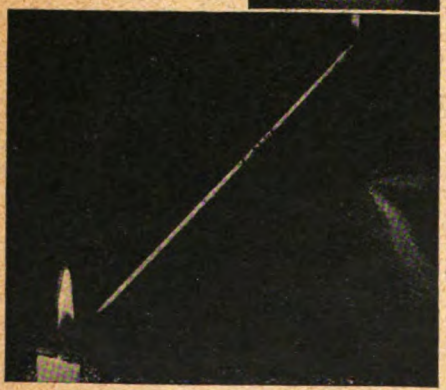
This is a refinement, very typical of Mr. Grave, that gives a peculiar and dry quality to his work which is very acceptable. To keep a straight face is, or should be, the first lesson in the jester's art, and it is one which Mr. Grave has learned well. As an exponent of the gravely humorous, in short, he is admirably successful in living up to his name.

CURIOSITIES.

[We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.]

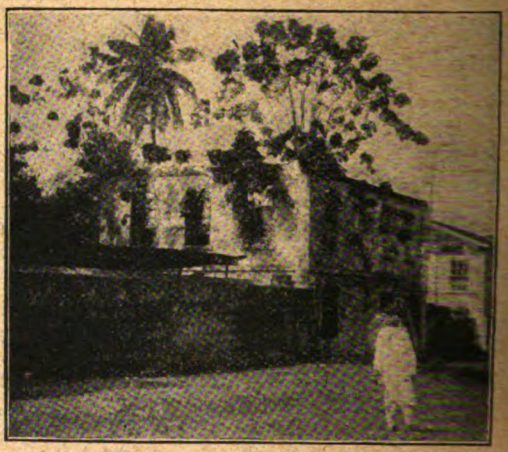
IS A CANDLE FLAME ALL ALIGHT?

MOST people regard a candle flame as a very simple affair, but it is really a somewhat complicated arrangement. As a matter of fact, it can be divided into three well-marked zones. Outside is a dark yellow layer; in the middle a highly-luminous layer can be detected; whilst the centre of the flame consists of a bluish part that hardly gives out any light. Indeed, the innermost zone



of the candle flame is chiefly composed of gases that are not burning at all. It is easy, in a pretty little experiment, to prove this. Take a short piece of glass tubing about as thick as a pencil and with both ends open. Twist a bit of wire round the tubing in such a way that it can be held in the flame without burning the fingers. Now thrust one end of the tubing into the blue zone of the candle flame, as shown in the photograph. After a moment it will be seen that a vapour is issuing from the exposed end of the tubing. When a light is applied this escaping gas catches fire, proving that the interior of the flame is largely composed of unburnt vapour.—Mr. S. Leonard Bastin, Bournemouth.

WHERE VEGETATION FLOURISHES.



THIS photograph, taken in a street in Freetown, Sierra Leone, shows an instance of the remarkable fertility of tropical flora. The tree at the corner of this disused house is actually growing out of the wall to a height of fifteen feet, whilst its branches have spread themselves through the lower windows. Another tree is also well under way at the farther corner.—Mr. A. Turnbull, Sunderland.

Bridge Problem.

BY ERNEST BERGHOLT.

Hearts—Ace, knave, 4
Clubs—10
Diamonds—Ace, 10
Spades—Queen, 8

Hearts—King, queen, 7, 3
Clubs—None
Diamonds—Queen, knave, 9, 7
Spades—None

Hearts—9, 8
Clubs—Knave, 7
Diamonds—8, 6
Spades—10, 9

Hearts—10, 6
Clubs—Ace, 6
Diamonds—3
Spades—7, 6, 4

There are no trumps, and A has the lead. A and B are to win six out of the eight tricks against any possible defence.

(Solution will be published in next month's issue.)

THE BROKEN WINDOW—SOLUTION.

THE complete inscription on the window—half of which was shown in last month's "Curiosities"—read as here given, the addition of HOT, POTA, and SOLD thus making clear what was something of a puzzle.

HOT	CHIP
POTA	TOES
SOLD	HERE

A REMINDER!

DO not forget that THE STRAND MAGAZINE *may now be sent* POST FREE *to British soldiers and sailors at home or abroad. All you need do is to hand your copies, without wrapper or address, over the counter at any post-office in the United Kingdom, and they will be sent by the authorities wherever they will be most welcome.*

STORY OF THE "TANKS" By H. G. WELLS

A PROPHECY FULFILLED.

Cold & Raw, sn't it?"
FRY'S
RE BREAKFAST
COCOA
ll soon warm you up.
See Page 22.

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

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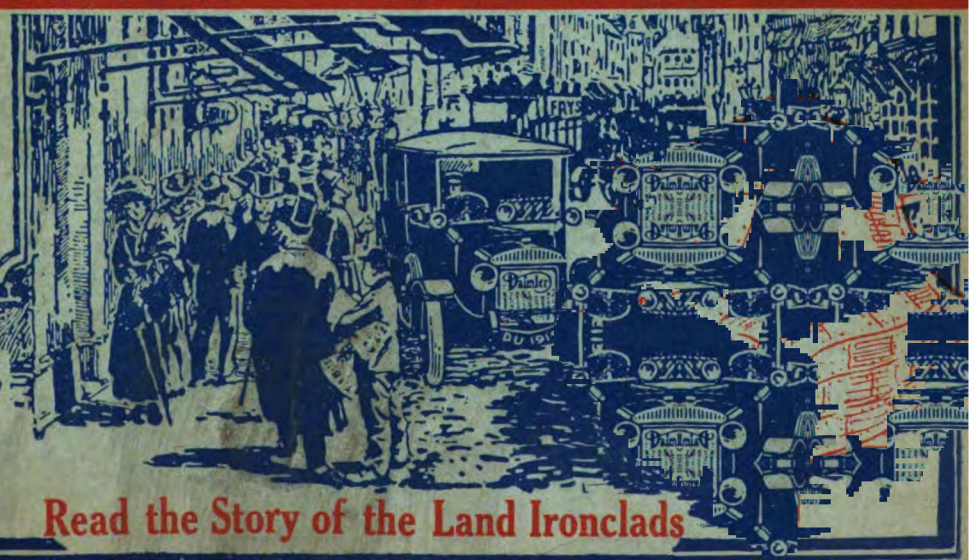
DOOMED BY THE KAISER TO RIDE TO DEATH

A TERRIBLE REVELATION

You can send this Magazine Post Free to the Troops.
See page 580.



NOVEMBER, 1916.
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Made in Black, Brown, and Grey Rubber, and in many shapes and sizes. Sold everywhere. Note: there is no increase in the price of "Wood-Milnes."

INDEX TO ADVERTISERS, SEE PAGES 2 AND 4.

"THE YOUNG OFFICER'S FIST SHOT OUT, FOUND ITS MARK EXACTLY OVER THE KAISER'S RIGHT EYE, AND THE SUPREME WAR LORD WENT TO THE DECK."

(*See page* 481.)

DOOMED BY THE KAISER TO RIDE TO DEATH.

A TERRIBLE REVELATION.

"There is another story on the subject which is only whispered."
"NORWAY": By N. and B. JUNGMAN.

What story? Why whispered? What is this tale so terrible that it can only be spoken of with bated breath? That it is the purpose of the following pages to reveal.

By HAYDEN CHURCH.

TO-DAY every sidelight that can be obtained upon the complex character of that arch-enemy of Britain and of civilization—the Kaiser—is of vital interest to the inhabitants of these islands—nay, to all the world. Up to the day when he shattered the peace of Europe and plunged whole nations into war, we knew Wilhelm II. as a vain, albeit not ungifted, man, coarse after the fashion of Teutons and fond of posing; ambitious, as we believed, of world power, yet not, on the whole, a "bad sort." We pictured him, in short, as not entirely unworthy of the English blood that flows in his veins, as domineering but not unscrupulous, boastful but not brutal.

But what unknown dark pages in the career of the "All-Highest War Lord" had been expunged from the record of Wilhelm II. as the world was allowed to know it, what sinister chapters blotted out of his record by the courtiers and sycophants who surround him?

This question asks itself involuntarily on learning the long-suppressed details of an isolated episode—mayhap one of many—that stood to the War Lord's debit long before the war in the great book of Life. It is a shameful history, and is now published on the authority of an English gentleman who heard the details from a local resident, and whose responsibility, though he shrinks from publicity, is known to and guaranteed by the Editor of this Magazine.

The story came to the knowledge of this gentleman while staying in Norway, which was the scene of the incident, some thirteen years ago.

Why has he maintained silence until now? He did so at the time because of the fact that England and Germany were then at peace, and that the Kaiser was ostensibly our friend. Probably no publication of standing in this country would have cared to assume the responsibility of publishing a story that revealed the War Lord as a pitiless monster who recked nothing of human life when it was a question of personal revenge. At the time that this crime was committed, it is true, the details were vaguely hinted at in certain quarters here. A Scottish newspaper of repute "carried" a couple of paragraphs cabled from Norway dealing with the incident, but in these the character of the incident was hardly more than suggested.

In the interval the grim story that he had

heard from trustworthy eye-witnesses had almost faded from this Briton's mind, though there were times when it arose before him subconsciously and like an evil dream. Recently, however, it was vividly recalled to him by a couple of paragraphs in a book of travel dealing with Norway, a land for which he, a frequent visitor in the past, has a great love. And with the recollection of this grim tale, a significant one as revealing the true character of the cruel autocrat who has dared to claim the title of the Prince of Peace, came a resolution to make known the facts, as related by persons on the spot, in order that his countrymen, engaged in the most momentous and formidable struggle in their history, might know even more definitely than they do already the true characteristics of their most relentless foe.

The paragraphs in the work of travel mentioned which relate to this sinister history occur in the course of reference to Odde, a tiny Norwegian village in the mountains at the southern end of the Sorfjord, which is an arm of the world-famous Hardangerfjord. It is reached by steamer from Bergen, from which it is roughly a hundred miles distant, or from Stavanger (the route that was chosen by our traveller), whence one travels through the magnificent Bratlandsdal, and by road past the beautiful waterfalls, Espelandsfos and Laatefos, the latter of which was the scene of the tragedy which it is our duty to describe. The village is well known to travellers, including many European royalties, as having in its vicinity the renowned Buarbrae Glacier and also the Tyssedal, through which are reached the extremely picturesque and clear water of Rengedalsvand, situated fifteen hundred feet above the sea, and the stupendous Skjoggedalsfos, or falls, which in June descends in an unbroken leap of five hundred and thirty feet.

"Our driver," says the writer of the travel-book to which reference has been made—"Norway," by Nico and Beatrix Jungman, 1905—"assured us that one of the carrioles in which we drove from Odde had been used by the German Emperor. I believe that in the season a great point is made of providing every stranger with *the* carriole; hundreds are so honoured.

"Well, the Kaiser Wilhelm is a wonderful man, and he would be rash who should say, 'This even the Emperor cannot do.' To explain his frequent presence here, a story must be told. A few years ago a young German lieutenant, riding down the steep road from Laatefos on his bicycle, swerved from the straight course, and was hurled into the raging waters beside which runs the road. The incident is supposed to have been witnessed by a child and an old man, and

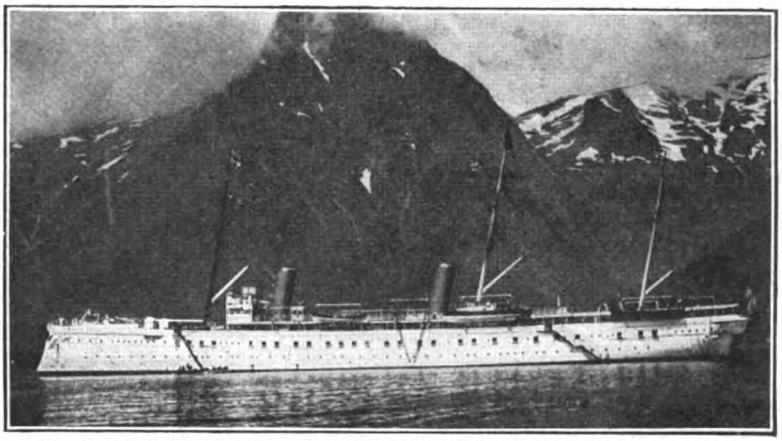
THE NORWEGIAN VILLAGE OF ODDE.

THE SPOT BY THE ISLAND MARKED WITH A CROSS IS THE POSITION IN WHICH THE KAISER'S YACHT WAS ANCHORED.

Photo. by] *[Underwood & Underwood.*

a few weeks afterwards the poor victim's body, torn by the rocks beyond all recognition, was found at some distance from the spot where the disaster happened. The Emperor, with two hundred men, arrived to search for the body, and a stone to the soldier's memory has been erected by His Imperial Majesty. There is another story on the subject which is only whispered. . . ."

This is the story that is "only whispered" in the Hardanger region. The fate of the young German who rode on his bicycle to death in the raging mountain torrent was no accident; it was the vengeance of the ruler of the German Empire for an act of *lèse majesté* on the part of the victim. These are the facts as related by the residents on the spot.



THE KAISER'S PRIVATE YACHT, THE "HOHENZOLLERN."
From a Photograph.

One summer, some nineteen years ago, the Kaiser, travelling in the Royal yacht, and accompanied, as was his wont, by a whole flotilla of warships, including even torpedo craft, designed to impress the Scandinavians, was on a cruise in the Norwegian fjords. In the course of this cruise the Royal yacht cast anchor off Odde, and next day its Imperial owner decided to pay a visit (not the first by many) to the famous Buarbrae Glacier, an excursion which, including the return, occupies some five hours. To reach the glacier one walks or drives in a *stolkjaerre*, as did the War Lord, through the valley to the Sandvenvand Lake, and then, after crossing a bridge, is rowed across the lake to the Garden Jordal, from which the traveller obtains his first view of the gigantic ice masses ahead.

In the present case, however, when only half-way to his destination, the eccentric Kaiser, for some unknown reason, changed his mind (perhaps he had decided instead to dash off a masterpiece in oils or to outdo Phidias with the spatula), and had himself conveyed back to the *Hohenzollern* at top speed.

During his absence, it appears, one of the younger officers of the Kaiser's entourage, a stalwart, good-looking young fellow, with rather a fiery temper, had bethought himself to beguile the tedium by getting out a bicycle which was kept below and obtaining a bit of unwonted exercise by riding it around the promenade deck. Totally unconscious of the return of the All-Highest, the lieutenant was pedalling light-heartedly from bow to stern and back again, when all of a sudden there was a commotion, a few ringing words of command, a general standing at attention, and the stern face of the supreme War Lord appeared above the side.

One half-incredulous glance revealed to the Kaiser the frivolous pursuit in which his young officer had been engaged in his absence. White with rage, he stamped up to the abashed young rider, furiously ordered him to dismount, and proceeded to administer to him a "dressing down" couched in the most abusive and insulting language. Standing rigidly at attention, his face flushing red and his lips trembling, the young officer received this Imperial "strafing" in practical silence, contenting himself with a few words of respectful regret; but when at the end the Kaiser, forgetful of his own Royal dignity, accompanied an order to betake himself to his cabin with a rough push that was equivalent to a blow, even the iron discipline of the Teuton snapped and outraged manhood came uppermost.

In a word the young officer's fist shot out, found its mark exactly over the Kaiser's right eye, and, to the horror of all, the supreme War Lord went to the deck in as pretty a heap as did ever an opponent of burly Jack Johnson or hard-hitting young Carpentier.

Assisted to rise by the scandalized members of his staff, the Kaiser, who was only dazed, hissed an order for the instant arrest of his

youthful assailant, who was forthwith placed in irons and confined in his cabin under guard. By command of the All-Highest, whose outraged pride was not assuaged by the fact that the vicinity of his assaulted optic was visibly blackening, a court-martial was hastily arranged for and was held the same evening.

What would have been the verdict of an English naval court under similar circumstances, were it conceivable that such could arise? One can scarcely believe that it would be death, or, if it were, that a King of England of our day, even one whose Royal person had been thus violated, would have consented that the extreme penalty should be exacted. But death was the sentence of this German court-martial, composed of the commanding officers of the Kaiser's attending squadron, and to this sentence the All-Highest forthwith gave his approval.

But they tempered their "justice" with "mercy," these devotees of Kultur and their Imperial master. They commanded no execution; instead they announced to the impious wretch who had dared to raise his hand against the earthly representative of "our good old German God," that by the War Lord's clemency he would be graciously permitted to commit suicide. He and his offending bicycle would be taken on shore, they told him, and he would be permitted to experience a fatal accident that would atone, so far as atonement could be made, for the crime that he had committed.

Can one believe that the Kaiser was ignorant of all this and what followed? The thing is impossible. On the following day the devilish proceeding was carried out. The wretched man and his bicycle were conveyed ashore under a strong guard as soon as it was light. High naval officers, it is said, went along to see that the "accident" duly happened. The stage was set for the final ghastly scene.

Could his judges have believed that the "accident" theory regarding the death of this young man would be credited, even by the simple-minded folk of this part of the land of fjords? It seems incredible, but the Teuton, ever since the war began, has given evidence of an implicit belief that the universe outside of Germany is composed exclusively of fools.

It is one of the last places on earth where one can conceive a bicycling accident as having occurred—this spot at the top of the famous waterfall, the Laatefos, where the victim of the War Lord's spleen rode to his death. It is safe, indeed, to say that no cycle ever had been ridden there before, nor has been since. There is no "steep road" here, and never has been. The cliff rises sheer, hundreds of feet above the Government road blasted in the mountain side that runs along beside the lake, and it was over the edge of this precipice that the doomed young officer rode, like a blind man, and plunged to certain death in the torrent that roars between the jagged rocks.

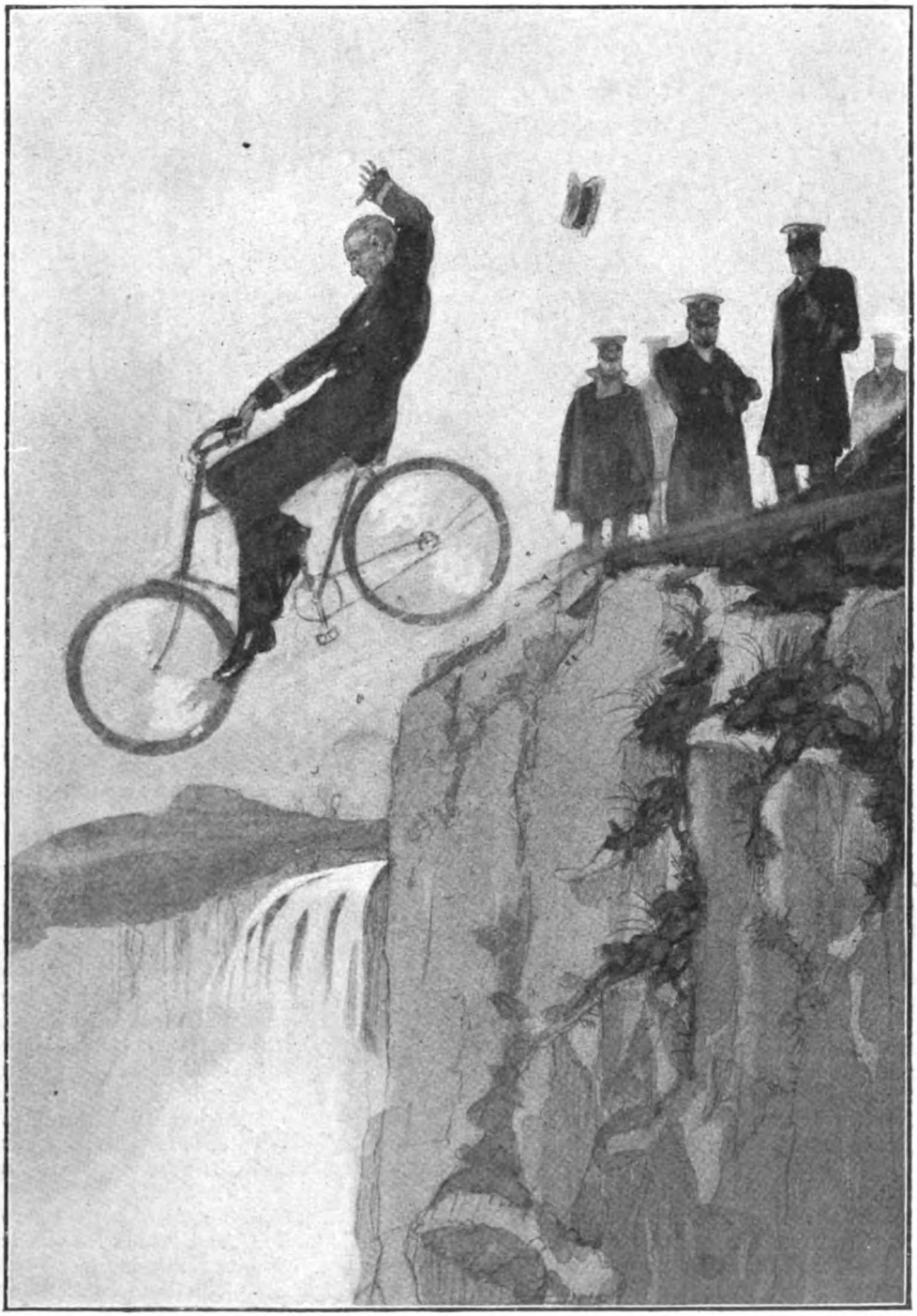
How even the victim and his executioners, conveying the cycle of death, reached the edge of this fall remains a mystery. It must have been along some rugged path, the ascent of which on foot would have been a toilsome task, to say nothing of conceiving that the victim did it on his machine. But reach the spot the party did, and the fulfilment of the "sentence" followed.

Picture the scene to yourself as it was revealed in the first rays of the rising sun. We are standing in one of the wild fruit "orchards" sloping down to the brink of the foaming Laatefos, which pours down the mountain side in two streams that meet and form the raging torrent that finally, on reaching the bottom, flows under a rocky bridge and into the waters of the Sandvenvand. Hundreds of feet below us stretch the waters of the beautiful lake, calm in the stillness of the early morning, and beyond is a rocky mountain wall where the peaks of Eidesnut and Jordalsnut rise to the sky-line.

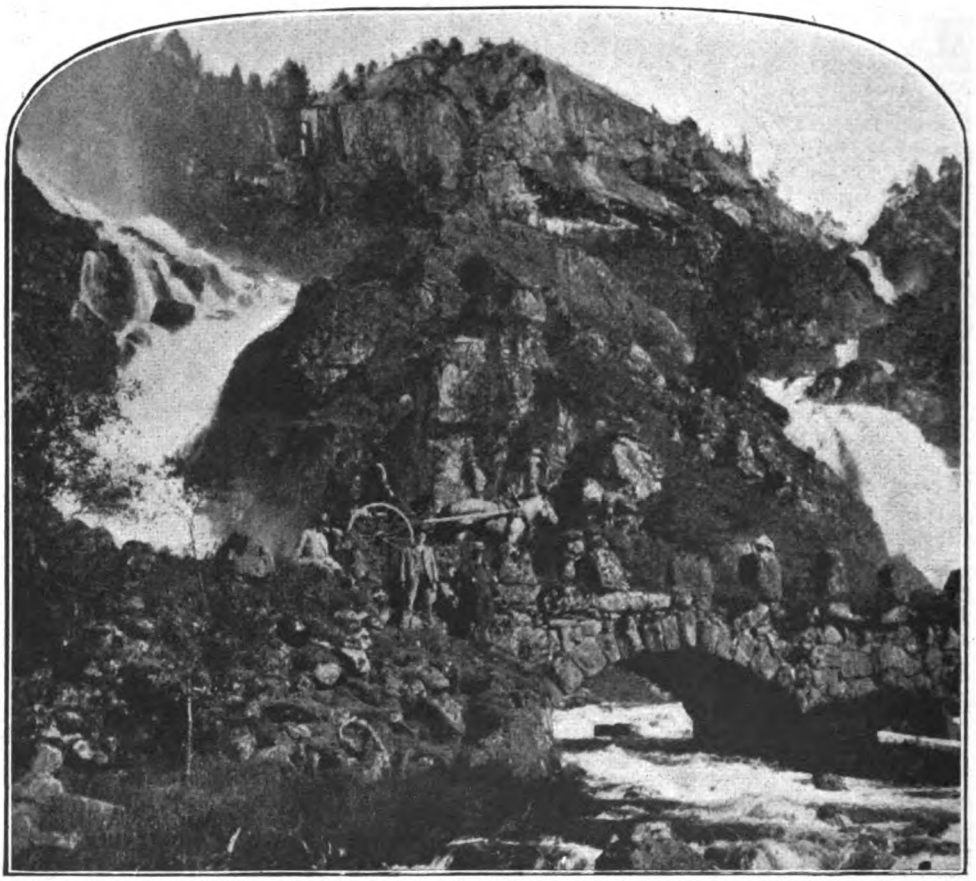
This wonderful panorama is the last upon which the Kaiser's victim ever looked on earth. Did he breathe a prayer before he rode over the brink to certain death? Did the men—his former comrades—who "supervised" this tragedy commiserate with him and offer their hands in a last grip of friendship? We do not know. We only know what followed.

No one, apart from the Hunnish officers, appears to have witnessed the tragedy save the old peasant and the child referred to in the work from which we have quoted. Chancing to glance up at the top of the waterfall, to their horror and amazement they saw a man in uniform suddenly appear, mounted on a bicycle, ride madly down to the edge, and then plunge headlong through space, to disappear with a splash in the raging waters below. Once or twice, as they watched, the body appeared, a black mass in the foaming torrent, but it disappeared almost immediately, to be seen no more.

Then, to their renewed amazement, this humble pair suddenly beheld a little group of officers, dressed like the dead man in the



"IT WAS OVER THE EDGE OF THIS PRECIPICE THAT THE DOOMED YOUNG OFFICER RODE, LIKE A BLIND MAN, AND PLUNGED TO CERTAIN DEATH."



THE LAATEFOS, THE BEAUTIFUL WATERFALL NEAR ODDE, OVER WHICH THE YOUNG GERMAN OFFICER RODE TO HIS DEATH.

Photo. by Underwood & Underwood.

uniform of the German Navy, who apparently had been standing impassively without making so much as a sign or uttering so much as a cry to warn their comrade, nor, at the end, lifting so much as a finger to save him. Later these officers *did* acquaint the village authorities with the details of the sad accident that had befallen their too venturesome friend, and after the lapse of several days the mangled body was found and, it is said, received a quiet burial, though in what spot is not known.

Did the All-Highest War Lord sleep peacefully on the night preceding and the night following the exaction of his pitiless vengeance, one wonders? Had he no thought of the home made desolate by the ruthless sentence, of the mother and father who may, for all we know, have been left childless by his heartless brutality? Was it the pricking of his conscience that led him, two years afterwards, to raise the memorial stone to the young officer's memory, that may be read by every traveller who fares along the road from Odde to Seljestad? There it stands, set into the rock through which this road is hewn, a slab some four feet square, upon which is chiselled the victim's name and the date on which his "execution" was consummated. Nothing else; no word to indicate the nature of the story that, as our authoress declares, is "whispered" in the locality to this day.

How did the Briton who tells this story chance to hear it? The circumstances may be related in his own words.

"Travelling from Stavanger in the summer of 1904," he said, "and fishing for trout at Nosflaten, I continued my journey northward through the picturesque Bratlandsdal, up the long, winding ascent of Hoore, along the gradual descent of glorious Seljestad, and past the beautiful waterfalls of Espelandsfos and Laatefos, and duly arrived at Odde,

where travel by road terminates. Further progress must be made by boat through the Sorfjord, the most southern branch of the renowned Hardangerfjord.

"In the Land of the Midnight Sun all travellers are comparatively early risers; summer is short, and there are long journeys to be made through country that affords continuous and ever-changing scenes of a magnificence that cannot be surpassed. Being a keen fisherman, and desirous of trying for trout in the district, and with no particular arrangements made to continue my journey northward, I rose at 3 a.m. on the first morning, bent on enjoying an early-morning drive to the river through the grand and impressive scenery.

"Early as I was, however," continued the speaker, "two other travellers appeared at the spot, near my inn, where one obtained a vehicle, one of whom bore a remarkable likeness to King Leopold of the Belgians. There is no special conveyance for royalties in these parts, and though I desired to make way for these other two travellers, they signalled me to precede them, and I was the first to start in a *stolkjaerre* for the river south of Sandvenvand, the others going in the direction of the Buarbrae Glacier. On my return to my hotel, I gathered that King Leopold's yacht, the *Victoria and Albert*, which formerly belonged to our own Queen, was then lying in the Sorfjord. The yacht was painted light green and there was no other ship in the fjord. The proprietor of my hotel told me that King Leopold and also the Kaiser were frequent visitors to Odde, where they stayed on their yachts for a day or two.

"Later the history that I have recounted to you was communicated to me, and I heard from the hotel proprietor that he himself had seen the Kaiser when next, a couple of days later, he put in an appearance in Odde, and discovered the War Lord to be wearing a green shade over his eye.

"This gentleman also informed me that he had interviewed the two humble witnesses of the tragedy, and he had also seen the body of the unfortunate young man after its recovery from the mountain torrent, and before its almost secret burial. From other quarters I had further confirmation of the details which I have given, and which were, in fact, and are, common knowledge in this quiet locality. No doubt it is imparted 'in whispers' to whomsoever is curious enough to inquire the history of the grim tablet on the road to the Laatefos which the War Lord caused to be raised two years after the enactment of the tragedy, though whether or not he came there, as this authoress states, 'with two hundred men,' I cannot say.

"Some of my fellow-guests at the hotel told me that they had also heard the story, and even seen the incident reported, though briefly and in more or less vague terms, in a Scottish paper, adding that the matter had been 'hushed up.' In this connection one may recall that Bergen, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, was under the rule of the Hanseatic League, a German trading company, which monopolized by fair means or by foul the commerce of Northern Europe. And in Bergen even to-day the traveller may see evidences and to spare of Hunnish ruthlessness and ferocity that show unmistakably that the German of 1916, with his Zeppelins, his U boats, his poison gas, and his warfare on the defenceless, is the natural kinsman of his forebears, and that the ethics of Kultur then were precisely what we have discovered them to be now."

Such is the dark and tragic story which is whispered to travellers by the inhabitants of Odde.

The CASTAWAYS.

By

W. W. JACOBS.

Illustrated by Will Owen.

CHAPTER XIX.

BREATHING hard after a struggle which had ended in his landing on the island in a very uncomfortable fashion, Carstairs, with a face of blank amazement, stood watching the receding boat as it pulled across the still waters of the lagoon. He stood until it had passed the reef and, reduced by distance to a mere speck, drew alongside the yacht. He turned to Lady Penrose and Miss Mudge, who stood behind.

"I don't know——" he began.

"*Look!*" exclaimed the girl, breathlessly.

Carstairs looked seawards again and, hardly able to believe his eyes, stood motionless as the ship, after picking up her boat, swung round and steamed away from the island. In a dazed fashion he turned and met the scornful gaze of Lady Penrose.

"Did you——" he began.

"I?" said Lady Penrose, with a gesture of impotent wrath. "I—— Oh, this is too much!"

She turned and walked away, waving an imperious hand as he offered to follow. Somewhat crestfallen he came back and stood gazing at Miss Mudge, who, having made a comfortable place in the sand, was sitting in it indulging in the luxury of a good cry.

"There, there," he said, uneasily, "don't cry."

"Ca-can't help it," said the girl, between her sobs. "I'm frightened. Have we got to stay here all night?"

Carstairs stooped and began to turn over a pile of stores that had been put out of the boat with them. "I don't know what the arrangements are exactly," he said, at length, "but it looks like it. Suppose you leave off crying and lend me a hand with this tent."

He began to drag the canvas higher up the beach, and Miss Mudge, after an aggressive sniff or two, wiped her eyes and followed with the pole. Twice the half-suffocated Carstairs had to extricate himself from folds of billowing canvas, but the tent was pitched at last and the stores moved into it. The generous quantity of goods provided did not lessen his uneasiness. There were things in tins, things in bottles, a fair-sized cask of water, and half a bag of ship's biscuit. A large axe and other tools, a gun and a revolver, blankets, and crockery of the enamelled order completed the tale of their belongings.

"Well, we sha'n't starve," he said, looking around.

"We sha'n't sleep," said Miss Mudge, eyeing the blankets dolefully. "Not even a pillow. And what are we to sit on?"

Carstairs, who was watching the distant figure of Lady Penrose proceeding slowly along the beach, made no reply. He turned and walked in the same direction, and, pausing irresolutely after a few steps, came back to the tent again.

He filled his pipe and sat for a long time smoking. The ship had disappeared and there was nothing in sight seawards but the still, blue waters of the lagoon and the tumbling seas beyond the reef. A glance sideways showed him Lady Penrose sitting down a quarter of a mile away and also looking out over the water. It was evident that she found his company distasteful.

"Better make some tea," he said, rising and fetching a small spirit-stove from the tent. "You can tell Lady Penrose that I have gone to explore the island and shall not be back for some time."

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He went off in the opposite direction and, reaching the end of the atoll, turned and proceeded along the weather side. The wind there was fresh and strong and the sea thundered at his feet in great white breakers. With his binoculars he scanned the horizon in vain for any sign of the missing ship. Puzzled and perturbed, he continued walking until, the desolation of the beach proving too much for him, he made his way across to the lagoon again.

Lady Penrose and Mudge went off together as he approached the tent, but, all things considered, he made a very substantial meal. He lit his pipe again when it was finished, and then, feeling himself somewhat in the way, went off along the beach and, making a comfortable seat in the white coral sand, sat down to think things over.

He came back to find the tent closed for the night. A blanket which had been thrown outside was evidently intended for his use, and somewhat touched by this sign of consideration for his welfare, he hollowed out a bed in the sand and tried to arrange himself comfortably before the short twilight should disappear.

He fell asleep after a long period of wakefulness, only to start up at dawn with a violent attack of cramp. The inhabitants of the tent awoke two seconds later, and the inflection of their whispers testified to their annoyance. Three times in all did Carstairs hurriedly forsake his couch and hop up and down on a leg that was trying to tie itself into knots; and three times did the murmuring of the people within add to his discomfort. He arose at last just in time to forestall a fourth attack and, making his way along the beach, stripped and waded into the lagoon.

"IN A DAZED FASHION HE TURNED AND MET THE SCORNFUL GAZE OF LADY PENROSE."

Miss Mudge got up an hour later, and after a cautious glance around went down to the water and returned with a well-filled bucket.

"Has Mr. Carstairs gone?" inquired Lady Penrose, from the interior of the tent.

The answer being satisfactory she came out, and after a soapless wash in salt water sat down for Mudge to attend to her hair.

At the sound of a not very distant cough she sprang to her feet and, with her hair flying, disappeared hastily inside the tent.

"I beg pardon," said Carstairs, as Mudge stood regarding him with a hostile stare. "I'm sorry I disturbed Lady Penrose, but I have just found this little comb in my pocket. She may be glad of it."

"Mudge!" cried an imperious voice from the tent.

The girl stooped and put her head inside. "My lady doesn't require a comb, sir," she said, returning.

"Oh, all right. Sorry," said Carstairs, pitching it in front of her.

"My lady doesn't require a comb, sir," repeated Mudge, in severe accents.

"Just so," said Carstairs, mildly. "Just so; but I suppose I can leave it in my er—sleeping apartment if I wish? I shall not be back for some time."

He turned and, keeping the fate of Lot's wife well in mind, disappeared in the distance. Lady Penrose, after watching from the tent, came out and sat on the beach again.

"I do hope there'll be no savages, my lady," said Miss Mudge, gazing helplessly at her mistress's hair. "Every time I woke up in the night I was thinking of them."

"I prefer savages to some civilized people," said Lady Penrose, glancing in the direction Carstairs had taken.

"Yes, my lady," said the girl, dutifully; "but I'd like to see that Mr. Tarn again, that I would—I got *some* of his hair when he caught hold of me."

Lady Penrose sighed, and then, as the girl proceeded to use her fingers as a comb, uttered a sharp exclamation.

"You are not doing Mr. Tarn's hair," she said, sarcastically. "Oh! You are hurting me! Don't be so clumsy!"

"I'm very sorry, my lady," murmured the offender, "but your hair is so thick. And I've never seen it in such a tangle before."

"It's never had such a pillow before," was the reply. "O-oh! Oh!"

"It's the sand in it, I think," said the girl, pausing. "If we'd only got a comb——"

"Yes, but we have not."

"No, we have not," said Miss Mudge, with a longing glance at Carstairs' comb. She tightened her lips and attacked her task once more.

"You are very clumsy," said the victim, wincing.

"Yes, my lady," said the girl, with a doleful sniff. "It isn't my fault. I'll do hair with anybody, if I've only got the things to do it with. And I'm afraid your hair will be ruined for ever. It does seem a shame."

Lady Penrose looked grave. "Has Mr. Carstairs gone for a walk?" she inquired.

"Yes, my lady."

"A long walk?"

"He said he shouldn't be back for some time," replied the girl.

There was a long silence, at the end of which Lady Penrose gave a slight cough. Miss Mudge started and stepping backwards in an unobtrusive fashion picked up the comb and, still using the fingers of her left hand, began to use the comb with the right. After a few seconds she abandoned the use of fingers altogether.

"You see, you can do it all right if you like," said her mistress.

"Oh, my lor——. Yes, my lady," said Miss Mudge, respectfully.

She finished her task at last and, Lady Penrose having retired to the tent to complete her toilet, busied herself with preparations for breakfast.

"Make haste," said a voice from the tent. "I am hungry."

"There's no matches," said the girl. "Mr. Carstairs must have gone off with them. Shall I go and ask him for them?"

Lady Penrose hesitated. "No," she said at last, "it doesn't matter. We can drink cold water."

Miss Mudge sighed, and with lagging footsteps went to the barrel and filled a couple of mugs with the refreshing beverage. A piece of stale bread and some oil that had once been butter completed the feast. And they had just finished when the offender came sauntering up and with a cheerful smile asked for a cup of tea.

"Certainly," said Lady Penrose, as she got up and moved towards the tent. "You are our host, I believe. We have just finished."

Carstairs looked down at the remains.

"Good gracious!" he exclaimed. "Haven't you had any tea?"

"No matches," muttered Miss Mudge.

"I'm very sorry," said Carstairs, going on his knees and lighting the stove. "How thoughtless of me. Fill the kettle, please."

The girl obeyed with alacrity.

"And fetch a tin of something, and some biscuits."

He waved the girl away when the kettle boiled and made the tea himself, and despite the fact that the mug he sent in to Lady Penrose was returned untasted, with a curt message to the effect that she had had her breakfast, partook of a hearty meal. Miss Mudge, without prejudice, accepted three mugs of tea.

He sat smoking after the meal and reviewing in all its bearings a situation which was becoming more and more difficult. He knocked out his pipe and raising his field-glasses looked long and earnestly at the horizon. The blue surface of the sea was unbroken, and there was no sound except the noise of the surf on the outer beach. He turned, with a grave face, as Lady Penrose emerged from the tent.

"This is extraordinary," he exclaimed.

Lady Penrose, who was walking on, paused for a moment. "I am glad you think so," she said over her shoulder.

"Incomprehensible," murmured Carstairs. "However, I suppose we must make the best of it. I hope you slept well?"

"Thank you; yes."

"I was afraid I might have disturbed you. I am not used to sleeping in the open, and I got somewhat cramped. The dew was very heavy."

Lady Penrose said "Indeed!"

"And I must say," exclaimed Carstairs, with sudden heat, "that the part is unworthy of your powers."

"Part, sir?" said Lady Penrose, sharply. "Part?"

Carstairs nodded. "Little Miss Muffitt," he explained; "and, frankly, I don't like being the spider. The part doesn't suit me."

"Lit-tle Miss Muffitt!" repeated Lady Penrose, breathless with indignation.

"That's how it appears to me," said Carstairs. "Exactly like the old nursery rhyme. Directly I come, you disappear. Won't you please tell me why you are treating me like this?"

"Is there any need to ask?" she inquired.

"I think so," said Carstairs, firmly. "I behave very well indeed; remarkably well, I might say, to keep my word to you, and this is all the thanks I get."

Lady Penrose stood eyeing him in perplexity. "When I made that foolish suggestion I was not prepared for your—improvements," she said at last.

"Improvements," said the other. "*Mine?* Good heavens! You don't think that *I* arranged this, do you?"

"I imagine that the captain looked to you for orders, Mr. Carstairs."

"Orders!" repeated Carstairs. "Orders! I—I told him to do just what you suggested, and not a word more. Not a word. I thought that the whole thing would last about a couple of minutes, and I thought—I hoped—that it would deceive nobody. Why should I do such a thing? Give me a reason."

Lady Penrose gave a slight toss of the head. "I am not here to be catechized," she remarked, coldly.

"But—it's so unfair," protested Carstairs. "What reason could there possibly be for my behaving in such an outrageous fashion? You don't think I wanted to carry off Mudge, do you? Or—or—— By Jove!"

He stopped suddenly and gasped. Lady Penrose looked out to sea.

"Can't you see what an awkward position you have placed me in?" she said at last.

"Not me," said Carstairs, earnestly. "I assure you that I know nothing whatever about it. I shouldn't dare do such a thing. My respect and—and admiration—hopeless admiration—for you are far too great."

"Mr. Carstairs!" said Lady Penrose, reddening.

"It's true," he said, stoutly.

"I hope that the others will think so," retorted Lady Penrose, clasping her hands. "Think of Mrs. Jardine!"

"And Miss Flack, and the girls," said Carstairs, helpfully. "Yes. Still, what does it matter? And I will be quite frank with you. I am enjoying this."

"Enjoying it?" she gasped. "What is there to enjoy?"

"Sense of adventure," replied Carstairs. "And look at the cool, bright green of those palms, and the colour of the water. It's marvellous. But, above all and beyond all, I am enjoying the society."

Lady Penrose made a very creditable attempt to look bewildered.

"Mind," continued the other, "I am quite innocent in this affair; I had no more idea of being bundled into a boat like a truss of hay and landed here than you had, but the society of Lady Penrose compensates for everything."

"Mr. Carstairs!"

"It's true, and I had to say it. I've been wanting to say it for a long time."

"There's no need to say it to Mudge," retorted Lady Penrose, glancing at the tent.

"Sorry," said Carstairs, moving nearer to her, "but we are so far apart."

Lady Penrose drew back a little—perhaps a couple of feet. "But who *is* responsible for this?" she demanded. "Have the crew really mutinied?"

Carstairs shook his head. "I know no more than you do," he replied. "You heard all that passed so far as I'm concerned. Pope gave instructions as to details."

"Mr. Pope would never dream——" began Lady Penrose.

"No, no," said Carstairs. "It was real enough so far as I could see. And I must say that Tollhurst behaved splendidly. His behaviour was excellent. I was very pleased. He quite justified my opinion of him."

"I wonder whether he knew," murmured Lady Penrose.

"Nobody knew except ourselves and

Pope," replied Carstairs, "and the ladies were only informed just before it happened. This comes of playing with edged tools."

"All my fault," said Lady Penrose, shaking her head. "I wonder you care to speak to me."

Carstairs laughed. "I would sooner talk to you than do anything else in the world," he replied. "I am enjoying this amazingly. And you are not angry with me for—for telling you—how much I admire you?"

Lady Penrose bit her lip. "Mr. Carstairs," she said, entreatingly, "if you only knew what ears Mudge has got!"

"I understand," said Carstairs, as he stepped up and led her along the beach. "Let's see how far she can hear."

Their voices died away in the distance, and Miss Mudge, watching them from the tent, thought sadly of Mr. Markham, Mr. Biggs, a young man in the general shop at Berstead, and three members of the crew.

CHAPTER XX.

MR. TARN, somewhat overcome at the success of his leadership, stood in the saloon surveying his helpless victims. The truculence had faded from his face, and given way to an expression of acute uneasiness. He had got to the end of his tether, and was now looking anxiously around in search of a prompter.

"We don't want any more violence," said Knight, with a warning glance at him. "These ladies had better go to the drawing-room."

"As you please, sir," said the desperado, mildly.

"And don't play with us," proceeded Knight, winking at him. "It's bad enough to be in your power without being played with like a cat with a mouse. We don't want any of your infernal sarcasm."

"My wot?" said the amazed boatswain, as the ladies departed under escort.

"I'm surprised at you, Tarn," said Pope, in a deep voice. "It'll be penal servitude for you, for this."

"Or hanging," said Talwyn, grimly.

The unfortunate boatswain looked round imploringly.

"It's no good using hard words," said Knight, turning on Pope. "We've got to make the best of things."

"And keep this pirate in a good humour," added the doctor, in a low voice. "Just get Talwyn and Peplow away while I reason with him. I think I understand his mentality. There's no objection to these gentlemen going on deck, I suppose?" he said, turning to Mr. Tarn.

"O' course not," said that gentleman, effusively. "So long as they behave theirselves," he added, ferociously, as Knight glanced at him.

He stood tugging at his moustache and rolling his eyes as Pope, in a stately fashion, departed with his friends. Then his face relaxed and he gazed piteously at Knight.

"Wot about the skipper, sir?" he inquired, desperately.

"What about him?" inquired Knight, easily. "He's fast enough, isn't he?"

"He's fast enough, sir," conceded the boatswain, "and Brown is standing on guard over him with the cook's chopper. But wot's to be done now?"

Knight shook his head. "You are in charge," he said, slowly. "I know all about it. You have had your instructions from Mr. Pope and the skipper, haven't you?"

"In a roundabout way, yes," replied Mr. Tarn; "but you heard wot Mr. Pope said about penal servitood just now."

"Only his fun; he has got to keep up appearances," said Knight.

"And I *don't* like the way the skipper looks at me," pursued Mr. Tarn, in an aggrieved voice.

"Keeping up appearances," said Knight, again. "What are you worrying about? He told you to pretend to head a mutiny, didn't he?"

Mr. Tarn nodded. "And he told the officers not to interfere," he said, seeking to comfort himself. "And then Mr. Pope told me; and then Biggs come along and told me to do things that Mr. Pope and the skipper didn't want to tell me themselves. I tell you, I'm fair muddled up with it all."

"You're on velvet," said Knight, definitely.

"Well, I wish I was off of it," retorted the boatswain. "And wot I want to know is, wot's to be done now? The first officer is shut up in his cabin and laying on 'is back smoking; Captain Tollhurst is shut up in *his* cabin calling out for his boots and 'is firearms, wot we took away from 'im; and the skipper looks as if he might 'ave a fit at any moment."

"I should carry on if I were you," said Knight, thoughtfully. "Take us for a little cruise in the neighbourhood, and return to the island to-morrow and pick up Mr. Carstairs and the others. And mind, whatever you do, don't take any notice of anything Mr. Pope says; he has got to go on pretending, you know. He is not

supposed to know anything about it. Let's go up and see whether the boat is back yet."

He followed the boatswain on deck just as the boat came alongside. Mr. Minns, the second officer, with an odd grin on his good-tempered face, was gazing in a speculative fashion at the skipper and the uneasy-looking seaman who stood guard over him with the chopper.

"Skipper plays his part well," said Knight, in a low voice.

Mr. Minns, after a quick glance at him nodded. "How many of you are in this?" he inquired. "And what's the next thing? Do you scuttle the ship, or burn it? It's all in the day's work. Don't mind me."

Knight shook his head. "I'm not sure," he said, slowly. "I suppose the skipper has got his ins'ructions. He doesn't look very comfortable; but I suppose we had better leave him alone. If he were released he would have to do something for the sake of appearances to get charge of his ship again."

"I'm not going to release him, if that's what you are driving at," said Mr. Minns, hastily. "He told me I wasn't to interfere; and I obey orders. If anybody had told me that the old man would let himself be handled like this, I wouldn't have believed him. Where's the pleasure in it? That's what I want to know. Where's the pleasure?"

He went back to the bridge, stopping on the way to receive instructions from a boatswain whose manner was an unhappy compromise between truculence and deference. The doctor came on deck as the yacht got under way again, and, walking with Knight past the skipper, took careful stock of that hapless mariner.

"Vobster's got to be untied," he said, as soon as they were out of earshot. "It's no position for a man of his years and temper; he'll burst something if he has much more of it. Tell Tarn to take that fool with the chopper away, and leave me a clear deck."

He went below to his cabin, whence he visited the smoke-room and mixed a long whisky and soda. The ice in the tumbler tinkled pleasantly as he came out on deck and in a stealthy fashion made his way to the pinioned Vobster and sat down beside him.

"Easy does it," he said, in a low voice. "If I undo your mouth, will you promise not to make a noise?"

"'SKIPPER PLAYS HIS PART WELL,' SAID KNIGHT, IN A LOW VOICE."

The skipper, with his eyes glued to the tumbler, nodded vigorously, and Maloney, with a cautious look around, took off the gag and held the tumbler to his lips. Slowly the skipper's head tilted backwards until not a drop of the precious fluid remained.

"Good?" inquired the doctor, placing the glass on the deck.

"Splendid," murmured Vobster. "Cut these things away. Quick! Cut these—cut these—cut—cut——"

"Bless my soul," said Maloney, with a grin as Knight came up. "He's gone to sleep."

He took out his knife and cut the bonds, and, the skipper being unable to do it for himself, straightened out his legs for him, and lowered his head to the deck. Then he signalled to Mr. Tarn, who, in a state of some trepidation, was watching the proceedings from afar off.

"Get two or three of the hands and have him carried to bed," he said, as the boatswain came up. "He's tired."

"Yess'r," said Mr. Tarn, doubtfully. "And suppose he wakes up while they are a-carrying of 'im?"

"He won't," said the doctor.

"But s'pose he does?" persisted the other.

The doctor rose to his feet and advanced on the boatswain, who backed hastily.

"D'ye doubt my skill, you imitation pirate?" he demanded, wrathfully. "Take him below, and look sharp about it."

He lent the procession his moral support by accompanying it below and adjuring it in forcible terms when it allowed the skipper's head to come into violent contact with the side of his bunk. The boatswain saw fit to regard the incident in a favourable light.

"Sleeping beautiful," he said, with an admiring glance at the doctor. "I—I wonder whether Captain Tollhurst is thirsty?"

The doctor, who was removing the skipper's clothes preparatory to putting him to bed, looked up, and under the awful witchery of his glance Mr. Tarn, muttering broken apologies, backed out of the cabin and made his escape.

By the time Maloney reached the deck again the island had almost disappeared, the tops of one or two palms being the only things in sight. In a short time they also vanished.

"I suppose Minns will be able to find it again," he said, turning to Knight.

"He'll have to," was the reply.

Maloney took his arm and paced him up and down the deserted deck. The third officer, who was in a state of sulky amazement, eyed them curiously as he passed on his way to the bridge.

"And what do you expect to get out of all this?" inquired the doctor, at last.

Knight shrugged his shoulders. "They wanted a mutiny," he said, "and I have given it to them. Also I have paid off a little bit of my score to Lady Penrose. She got up the mutiny to take a rise out of Tollhurst, and instead of that she is made the victim of her own cleverness. Think how awkward it will be for her when she comes aboard again. She has got to sail all the way home with Tollhurst and the other people. She'll see the joke in the face of every member of the crew, and I think she will be much too quiet and subdued to interfere with me much."

"Upon my word!" began the doctor, staring at him.

"And the story will follow her home," continued Knight, "with improvements, probably. She will be credited with having tried to kidnap Carstairs."

"I ought to have stopped it," said Maloney, shaking his head.

"That's what will happen unless some good angel intervenes," Knight went on.

"Are you the good angel?" inquired the other, crisply.

Knight nodded. "I might be, if it's made worth my while," he replied. "I think I can handle the situation all right. As a preliminary I have just picked the skipper's pocket. Pope told me of a little paper authorizing the old man to permit the mutiny, which I thought might come in useful. Anyway, it's safer with me."

"We're a nice couple," said Maloney, with a grin. "I hocus the man's drink and you go through his trouser pockets. If other things fail we might go into partnership."

"To-morrow morning," said Knight, thoughtfully, "I propose to take possession of the ship and go back and rescue the victims. If they are not grateful—as grateful as I think they ought to be—I shall have to talk to them plainly. And now let us go and reassure the ladies."

They found the ladies in the drawing-room with Pope, Talwyn, and Peplow vainly endeavouring to explain a position that none of them understood. A little exclamation of joy from Mrs. Gunnell greeted their entrance.

"Now tell us all about it," she said, making

room for Knight to sit beside her. "I'm sure you know. Has something gone wrong? Mr. Pope is a perfect sphinx."

"Not my fault," grumbled Pope.

"But you knew something about it," said Mrs. Jardine. "You told us not to be frightened, and that the men were going to act a little play to us. How did you know about it?"

"*Play!*" exclaimed Knight and the doctor together in surprised accents.

"I can't explain," said Pope. "It is a secret. I must see Vobster first."

"Vobster's asleep," said the doctor. "I'm treating him, and I won't have him disturbed. But what do you mean by 'play'?"

"I can't tell you," said Pope, with a worried look.

"If Pope has passed his word," said Knight, with a benignant glance at that gentleman, "you may as well give it up. Wild horses wouldn't induce him to break his word."

"And I am almost as much in the dark as you are," said Pope, earnestly.

"Almost!" repeated Mrs. Jardine, in a significant voice. "Was it part of the play to leave Mr. Carstairs and the others on a desert island?"

"And knock Captain Tollhurst down?" added Miss Flack.

"And frighten us all to death?" said Miss Blake, with a laudable attempt to suit her expression to her words.

Mr. Pope smiled wanly and, to the indignation of the company, edged slowly towards the door and disappeared. Mrs. Jardine and Miss Flack exchanged glances.

"Most mysterious," said the former.

"Most," said Miss Flack, with a little shiver.

"We must make the best of it," said Knight, with an air of pious resignation, as he left Mrs. Ginnell and took a seat next to Miss Seacombe. "Nobody is injured, and the crew seem to me to be unusually civil in the circumstances."

"Civil!" said Talwyn, starting up. "Civil! There is an armed sentry over Tollhurst's door, and when I went there just now he ordered me off. When I demurred he asked me whether I wanted one in the ha—ha—bread-basket!"

He looked around indignantly as Maloney, with an odd, spluttering noise, made a dive for the doorway and disappeared.

"How dreadful," said Mrs. Jardine, turning sympathetically to Talwyn.

"It is," said Knight. "There are five ladies here, and they all seem to understand the meaning of the word. In my young days——"

"This is no time for flippancy," retorted Mrs. Jardine, drawing herself up. "It is most serious. I am sure I don't know what to think. Surely the crew are not going to leave Lady Penrose and Mr. Carstairs on that island to starve?"

"Or draw lots," said Mr. Peplow, in a sepulchral voice.

Mrs. Jardine swung round in her chair and, putting up her glasses, stared him back into the silence from which he had emerged.

Dinner was a somewhat dreary function that evening, but it was reassuring to find that, so far as the ship was concerned, the usual routine was maintained. The waiters went about their work as though they had never heard of such a thing as a mutiny; and Markham, somewhat paler of face and tighter of lip than usual, presided with his accustomed efficiency.

After the well-lighted saloon and the cheerfulness engendered by a comfortable meal the deck seemed dark and sinister. Even Knight, pacing up and down with Maloney, confessed to a slight feeling of uneasiness as he peered into the darkness and thought of the loneliness of the island beyond.

"We are not a great distance away," he said, "and to-morrow we'll have them safe and sound aboard again."

"Man proposes"—said the doctor, comfortably. "Meantime I'll go and have a look at my patient. I don't want him to get up too soon, and undo all the good I've done him; it might lead to complications."

With the advent of a bright, clear morning Knight's misgivings, never very profound, faded away. The air was clean and exhilarating, and in a cheerful mood he paced the deck waiting for the sound of the breakfast bell. One by one most of his fellow-voyagers appeared from below, and after vain speculations as to the state of affairs obeyed the summons of the bell and trooped down to the saloon.

"We seem to be a small party," said Mrs. Jardine, looking around. "Where's Sir Edward and Mr. Peplow?"

Knight shook his head. "Overslept themselves, perhaps," he said, stirring his coffee.

"We were rather late last night," said Pope, "and perhaps they slept badly. I did."

It appeared that everybody had slept badly, except those that hadn't slept at all, and Miss Flack was just in the midst of a harrowing recital of her experiences with insomnia when Mrs. Jardine, with a sharp exclamation, held up her hand.

"What's that noise?" she demanded, quickly. "It sounds like Captain Tollhurst."

"Come out!" he shouted. "If you're not out before I count ten, I'll shoot."

On the stroke of five the two men came out on all fours, and under orders from Talwyn preceded him upstairs with their arms raised. The ladies, who had risen and huddled together in one corner, looked at each other aghast.

"All right," said Maloney, finishing his coffee; "nothing to be alarmed about. Second act, I expect. You wait down here."

"'THAT LITTLE WIPER DONE IT,' SAID THE SAILOR."

He bounded up the steps, followed by Knight and Pope, and, gaining the deck, stood meditatively scratching his nose. Tollhurst, with a pistol in his hand, was shouting orders to the red-faced third officer on the bridge; Markham, armed with a rifle, was standing over the fo'c'sle hatch; Peplow and Talwyn, also armed, were pacing the deck. A wounded seaman with his hand clapped behind him was leaning against the side, and a yard or two away Albert, still clutching a small penknife, stood regarding him in nervous triumph.

There was no doubt of it. The captain's voice, hard and commanding, sounded from above. Hoarse shouts were heard in reply, and as Knight swung his chair round preparatory to rising a couple of seamen descended the stairway at a bound and, after a wild look around the saloon, dived hastily beneath the table. Mrs. Jardine rose with a faint scream as Talwyn came running down with a rifle.

"That little wiper done it," said the sailor, as the doctor went towards him. "Crept up behind while I was walking along with my 'ands up."

"Take him below," said Tollhurst, in a sharp, quick voice, as he came towards them. "It's all right, doctor; I've retaken the ship."

(To be concluded.)

Stranger Than Fiction.

SOME EXAMPLES FROM MY SCRAP-BOOKS.

By GEO. R. SIMS.

Illustrated by Dudley Tennant.

I.

THAT fact is stranger than fiction is a conventional phrase, but convention is crystallized experience, and it has been the experience of all the ages in which the weavers of romance have flourished that the plain, unvarnished truth will reveal a far more startling picture than the most highly-coloured effort of the professional fictionist's invention.

The great masters of fiction took much of their material from the facts of everyday life.

They knew that the truth was frequently more startling, more dramatic, and more romantic than any event or series of events they could evolve from their own imagination.

In the columns of the daily newspapers there are constantly recorded true life-stories which are far more wonderful than the imagined life-stories of the heroes and the heroines of the novels and romances that crowd the shelves of the bookstalls in every part of our great cities.

The plot for a stirring story or thrilling drama is told almost daily in our Law Courts and police-courts by witnesses who are sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and who tell only that which they have seen with their own eyes.

Here is a tale of a mysterious disappearance, the *dénouement* of which is equal to the best effort of the professional fictionist. It was a mystery which for seventeen years baffled the police of Paris.

On January 17th, 1867, M. Georges Angoit, commission agent, of the Rue St. Martin, Paris, was married to a charming and amiable young lady, Mlle. Marie Domadier.

After the ceremony the young bride and bridegroom with the wedding party assembled for the bridal feast at a well-known restaurant in the Palais Royal. It was a gay little wedding party, and the bridegroom was the gayest of them all.

While the wedding feast was still in progress and all was going as merrily as the proverbial marriage bell, the head waiter came into the room and said, "M'sieu, there is a coachman downstairs who wishes to speak with you."

The bridegroom smiled, and exclaimed: "A present for me from a friend, I expect." Then, saying that he would only be away for a few moments, he followed the waiter downstairs.

At the door of the restaurant a cab was waiting, and several people saw the bridegroom come out and enter into conversation with the coachman.

And then a strange thing happened. M. Angoit, who was bareheaded and without his overcoat—it was a bitterly cold day—opened the door of the cab, got into it, and the coachman whipped up his horse and drove off.

Minute after minute passed, and still the bridegroom failed to reappear, and the bride and her friends began to wonder what could have detained him so long.

Presently one of the guests went below to see if the bridegroom was still talking to the mysterious coachman, and there learnt that the coachman had taken the bridegroom away with him.

"He has been sent for by a friend. He will return with some surprise for us," said the bride, trying to reassure herself; but an hour passed, two hours passed, and there were no signs of the absent one, and no message came from him.

Then the wedding party broke up in consternation, and the bride, terrified and weeping, returned to her mother's house to await events.

The friends of the bride went to the police, who at once commenced to make inquiries, and succeeded in obtaining a description of the coachman who had been seen in conversation with the missing man.

A likeness of the bridegroom was procured and his photograph sent about in every direction, but the coachman was never identified, and not the slightest clue could

"M. GEORGES ANGOIT, COMMISSION AGENT, OF THE RUE ST. MARTIN, PARIS, WAS MARRIED TO A CHARMING AND AMIABLE YOUNG LADY, MLLE. MARIE DOMADIER."

be obtained as to the whereabouts of the bridegroom, who on his wedding day had apparently started on his honeymoon by himself.

The bride resumed her maiden name, and after her mother's death went to live with a married sister. Neither she nor any of her relations ever had the faintest idea why Georges Angoit, who had been a most devoted lover, should have left her side on their wedding day and vanished into space.

In 1884, seventeen years after the

bridegroom had left his bride at the marriage feast "for a few moments," M. Perez Urrigaray, a chamois hunter, while out on the mountains near the Seo de Urgel, in Spain, killed an animal which fell into a deep crevice.

The chamois hunter descended to the spot and there came upon the skeleton of a man to which some portions of clothing were still adhering. The hunter at once went off and informed the local authorities of his gruesome discovery. They proceeded to the spot and made a careful examination.

In the pocket of what remained of a coat the searchers found an envelope, and the envelope was addressed to M. Georges Angoit, Commission Agent, Rue St. Martin, Paris. The address was still perfectly legible.

The mystery which had baffled the police of Paris for seventeen years was solved at last. The missing bridegroom had been discovered lying dead in a crevice of the rocks of the Seo de Urgel in Spain!

The doctors who examined the skeleton gave it as their opinion that death had occurred about ten years previously, but they were probably wrong. The missing bridegroom would hardly have carried about with him in his pocket for seven years an envelope upon which was his Paris address.

M. Georges Angoit, lured from the Palais Royal party by a coachman "with a message," had either been conveyed to the rocky heights of the Seo de Urgel and there disposed of, or he had set out on his solitary wedding trip to commit suicide. But it was a long way to go, seeing that he could have found any number of opportunities in Paris.

From the wedding feast to the lonely mountain in Spain; from the side of his newly-married wife to the mysterious death which was only to be discovered seventeen years later!

The novelist might fill in the journey of the bridegroom from the altar to the grave with romantic details, but he would imagine no stranger story than that which these plain, unvarnished facts reveal.

The art of deftly weaving the threads of a plot and keeping the reader in almost breathless suspense as to the *dénouement* was an art in which the late Miss Braddon excelled.

But some years ago a story was commenced in a coroner's court in a small Devonshire town, and continued in the local police-court, which was quite as interesting from the mystery point of view as "Lady Audley's Secret," a romance which at the time held the English public spellbound.

Let me tell the story in the plain, straightforward, matter-of-fact way in which it was unfolded from time to time before the local magistrates.

Early in April, 1884, a charming young lady of twenty-two, the daughter of a gentleman of means and position, rode out of the park which surrounded her father's residence, the Manor Hall. She was accompanied by a groom.

They rode into the small Devonshire town which was a few miles distant. Arrived at the office of the registrar, the groom dismounted and assisted the young lady to alight. The groom then led the horses a little distance away, and the young lady entered the office of the registrar.

There a barrister who had lately returned from New Zealand, where he had a practice, was waiting for her. A few minutes later the couple came out of the office. They were now husband and wife.

The thus united lovers had met only a few weeks previously. It was stated in the evidence that was given in a court of justice not many days after the marriage that they had been introduced to each other by a village pedlar who knew them both.

The young lady's parents had other views for their daughter, and it was for this reason that the marriage was a hasty and a clandestine one.

The young lady had willingly consented to the ceremony, which would place it beyond the power of anyone to separate her from the man of her choice.

But the young barrister, having bound himself legally to the girl he loved, behaved in an honourable manner. He took his bride there and then back to her home, and informed her parents of the marriage.

"Now," he said, "that I have secured my bride, I am going to New Zealand to settle up my affairs in order that I may return and offer my wife a home in England worthy of her."

The marriage took place in the middle of April. Five days later the husband, who had called at the house every day, but had only seen his wife in the presence of her parents, announced that he was leaving at once for New Zealand, and bade his bride an affectionate farewell.

On April 28th, about a week after her husband had bidden her good-bye, the young lady had her horse saddled and went out riding alone.

A little later she returned and changed her riding dress. Then she whistled her dog and

strolled with him towards a pond in the grounds in which she was accustomed to let the dog swim.

Half an hour later the dog returned to the house alone. As the young lady did not come back at the dinner hour search was made in the grounds for her, but without success.

Her mother at once made up her mind that the young wife had left home by arrangement with her husband, and gone to join him. But the next morning one of the gardeners made a tragic discovery. He found the daughter of the house in one of the ponds, standing in an upright position, with her head a foot or two below the surface of the water.

An inquest was held. There were no marks upon the body, and there were no signs of a struggle at the edge of the pond. It was almost impossible to imagine foul play. It appeared to be a case of accidental drowning, and an open verdict was returned.

On the day that this verdict was returned a letter was received at the Manor Hall addressed to the dead woman. It was opened, and found to be from her husband.

The letter was dated from Brindisi. It was of an affectionate character, and contained this passage: "I am hurrying on at the fastest rate, and shall soon be home again."

But there was a curious thing about this letter. It was dated from Brindisi, but the envelope in which it came bore only the Plymouth postmark, and had an ordinary English stamp upon it. This was, however, explained by the writer of the letter. He had enclosed it with several others to his solicitor in Plymouth and asked him to post it on.

The police, to whom the letter was shown, accepted it in good faith as a proof of the husband's absence from England at the time of his wife's tragic accident in the pond in her father's grounds.

But when, a day or two later, the police heard that the husband had been seen in a cottage in a village a few miles away on the very day that the accident happened, the letter from Brindisi with the Plymouth postmark on it at once excited suspicion.

The village was visited, with the result that the husband and the man in whose cottage he was staying were both arrested. The husband was charged with being concerned in the death of his wife, and the man, having admitted that the letter from Brindisi had been written in his house and had been posted by him at Plymouth, was charged with being an accessory.

This man frankly admitted before the magistrate that he had heard of the tragedy, and had shown a report of the inquest in a local paper to the lady's husband, who appeared to be very much distressed.

Here is a situation which the fictionist would hail with joy. A young wife drowned in a pond on her father's estate after a clandestine marriage, followed by an immediate return to the parental roof; the young husband at the time of the tragedy hiding in a villager's house some five miles away and there writing a letter to his wife and dating it "Brindisi"; hearing of the tragedy, having the account of the inquest shown to him, and yet never leaving his place of concealment to visit his wife's bereaved family or to follow her to the grave.

The novelist would only have to put these facts picturesquely before his readers to awaken the keenest interest in the unravelling of the plot.

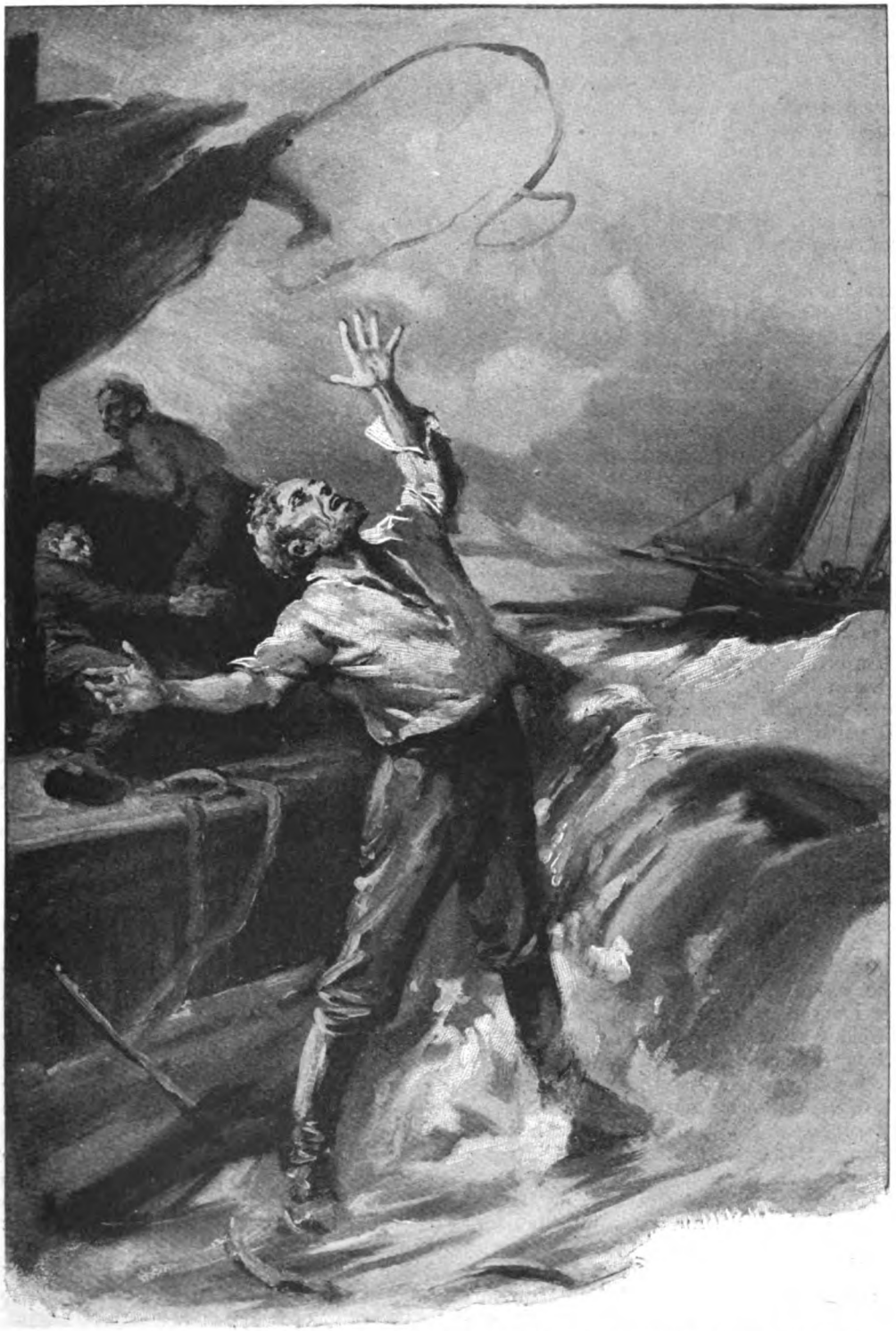
The ordinary reader of romance would come to the conclusion that the young husband was guilty, that he had met his wife somewhere in her father's grounds and had "disposed" of her. The wary reader might suspect that there would be another solution of the problem.

But if the young husband were not guilty, why had he remained in hiding and written a letter to his wife dated "Brindisi"? As this is a true story and not fiction, there is no need to keep the reader in suspense.

The man who had harboured the young husband was released almost immediately. The husband himself was brought up three or four times before the magistrate, but nothing beyond the writing of the Brindisi letter was proved against him.

On the last occasion the inspector in charge of the case informed the magistrate that the authorities had satisfied themselves that it was impossible that the accused could have been concerned in his wife's death. The police had obtained absolute proof that on the day of the tragedy the accused had never for one moment quitted the cottage in which he was staying, and that he had remained in the cottage all that night and a considerable portion of the following day—in fact, long after the body of the unfortunate lady had been discovered.

The accused was at once discharged, and immediately after his release he gave the Press his own explanation of the circumstances which had caused such grave suspicions to be entertained with regard to him.



"HE BECAME DELIRIOUS, AND BURST INTO PEALS OF MANIACAL LAUGHTER AND SANG AT THE TOP OF HIS VOICE WILD SNATCHES OF SONG."

He explained why he had pretended to be on his way to New Zealand, and why he had remained hidden a few miles from his wife's home. He remained, he said, "because he was apprehensive of the treatment his wife might receive after his supposed departure. He wanted to be near her to shield her if the necessity should arise."

When he heard of the tragedy and the inquest it was his intention to go to London and then return and give himself up, but he was arrested before he could put his plan into execution.

And then the hero of this romance, whose innocence had been triumphantly proved, added a thrill to the final situation by saying that he refused to accept the verdict of the coroner's jury, and he declared that he was already in possession of evidence which, when it was laid before the Home Secretary, would lead to startling developments, and perhaps to an arrest.

And thus this true story ends with a new turn given to it which would enable a master of fiction, say a Gaboriau, to carry it on for another twenty chapters at least.

Strange wild scenes of the sea have been described for us again and again by novelists whose speciality is life on the ocean wave. But you will have to search their pages diligently to find a scene as strange and as weirdly thrilling as one which occurred in the North Sea early in November, 1884, the story of which was brought ashore by the crew of a Grimsby smack.

Overtaken by a tremendous gale while about a hundred miles from Spurn Head, in Yorkshire, the Dutch lugger *Martje* capsized.

A mighty sea struck her and turned her over, imprisoning eleven men in the cabin, in which seven of them were quickly drowned. The vessel partly righting herself, the four survivors managed to scramble out, and they all clung to the stem-head, the only part of the lugger which kept above water.

They hung on through the long, dark night. Towards dawn one of them was washed off by the seas, but the other three held on through the day, straining their eyes over the waters in the hope of rescue.

Towards evening one of the poor fellows became delirious, and burst into peals of maniacal laughter and sang at the top of his voice wild snatches of song.

Another night of fearful peril and suffering passed, and then the Grimsby smack *General Wolseley* bore down upon the wreck and endeavoured to rescue the survivors.

The man who had gone mad refused to leave. He clung with frenzy to the hull of his vessel.

Then the mate of the *General Wolseley*, at the imminent peril of his life, managed to get on to the wreck with a rope. He tied it round the madman's waist and an attempt was made to drag him into the boat.

Still the madman held on, shouting that he was going below to tell his mates that help had come at last. The rope was let go in order that other means of saving the poor fellow might be tried.

Then, shouting "We're saved, boys, we're saved!" the madman, with a wild peal of laughter, plunged into the sea.

A newspaper writer, recording this true strange story of the sea, concluded his narrative with these words: "Fiction has rarely conceived anything more grim and ghastly in its humour than the incident of this poor Dutchman beaten about in a wild sea on that stem-head for two days and two nights, and then with wild laughter plunging down to tell his drowned comrades that rescue had come."

In the streets of New York some years ago an organ-grinder was arrested for cruelty to his monkey. When the monkey was taken charge of by the police, it was discovered to be an emaciated little specimen of humanity, a girl child sewn up in a monkey's skin!

The fictionist who told the story of a little girl monkey chained to an organ and performing in the streets would be regarded as a gruesome Munchausen.

The heir to an earldom discovered among the boarded-out pauper children of a workhouse! That would be too much for the readers even of the old *London Journal*. But it happened.

A princess, once the wife of a duke who was an ambassador to the Russian Court, a princess closely allied to a Royal house, earning her living as a barmaid at the Folies Bergères!

A brilliant and beautiful woman, once the queen of society and a welcome guest in the palaces of Royalty, smiling and serving behind the bar on the promenade of a Paris music-hall!

But the story is true. It is a true story stranger than fiction, that I may take an opportunity of telling on a future occasion.

A PROPHECY FULFILLED.

THE LAND IRONCLADS.

By H. G. WELLS.

Illustrated by Claude A. Shepperson, R.I.

This Story made its first appearance in our pages nearly thirteen years ago. We have decided to reprint it here—not only for the sake of new readers, but of many old ones—as the most startling case on record in which the vision of a fiction-writer has "come true" in actual fact. The landship of imagination is the "tank" in being—the description of its doings might have been written at the Front to-day. The chief point of difference is a matter for our pride. The landship was an invention of an enemy, while of the men who have conceived, built, and driven our new monsters through the firing-line, one and all are British-born.

I.

THE young lieutenant lay beside the war correspondent and admired the idyllic calm of the enemy's lines through his field-glass.

"So far as I can see," he said, at last, "one man."

"What's he doing?" asked the war correspondent.

"Field-glass at us," said the young lieutenant.

"And this is war!"

"No," said the young lieutenant; "it's Bloch."

"The game's a draw."

"No! They've got to win or else they lose. A draw's a win for our side."

They had discussed the political situation fifty times or so, and the war correspondent was weary of it. He stretched out his limbs. "Aaai s'pose it *is!*" he yawned.

"*Flut!*"

"What was that?"

"Shot at us."

The war correspondent shifted to a slightly lower position. "No one shot at him," he complained.

"I wonder if they think we shall get so bored we shall go home?"

The war correspondent made no reply.

"There's the harvest, of course . . . ."

They had been there a month. Since the first brisk movements after the declaration of war things had gone slower and slower, until it seemed as though the whole machine of events must have run down. To begin with, they had had almost a scampering time; the invader had come across the frontier on the very dawn of the war in half-a-dozen parallel columns behind a cloud of cyclists and cavalry, with a general air of coming straight on the capital, and the defender-horsemen had held him up, and peppered him and forced him to open out to outflank, and had then bolted to the next position in the most approved style, for a couple of days, until in the afternoon, bump! they had the invader against their prepared lines of defence. He did not suffer so much as had been hoped and expected: he was coming on it seemed with his eyes open, his scouts winded the guns, and down he sat at once without the shadow of an attack and began grubbing trenches for himself, as though he meant to sit down there to the very end of time. He was slow, but much more wary than the world had been led to expect, and he kept convoys tucked in and shielded his slow-marching infantry sufficiently well to prevent any heavy adverse scoring.

"But he ought to attack," the young lieutenant had insisted.

"He'll attack us at dawn, somewhere along the lines. You'll get the bayonets coming into the trenches just about when you can see," the war correspondent had held until a week ago.

The young lieutenant winked when he said that.

When one early morning the men the defenders sent to lie out five hundred yards before the trenches, with a view to the unexpected emptying of magazines into any

night attack, gave way to causeless panic and blazed away at nothing for ten minutes, the war correspondent understood the meaning of that wink.

"What would you do if you were the enemy?" said the war correspondent, suddenly.

"If I had men like I've got now?"

"Yes."

"Take those trenches."

"How?"

"Oh—dodges! Crawl out half-way at night before moonrise and get into touch with the chaps we send out. Blaze at 'em if they tried to shift, and so bag some of 'em in the daylight. Learn that patch of ground by heart, lie all day in squatty holes, and come on nearer next night. There's a bit over there, lumpy ground, where they could get across to rushing distance—easy. In a night or so. It would be a mere game for our fellows; it's what they're made for. . . . Guns? Shrapnel and stuff wouldn't stop good men who meant business."

"Why don't *they* do that?"

"Their men aren't brutes enough; that's the trouble. They're a crowd of devitalized townsmen, and that's the truth of the matter. They're clerks, they're factory hands, they're students, they're civilized men. They can write, they can talk, they can make and do all sorts of things, but they're poor amateurs at war. They've got no physical staying power, and that's the whole thing. They've never slept in the open one night in their lives; they've never drunk anything but the purest water-company water; they've never gone short of three meals a day since they left their devitalizing feeding-bottles. Half their cavalry never cocked leg over horse till it enlisted six months ago. They ride their horses as though they were bicycles—you watch 'em! They're fools at the game, and they know it. Our boys of fourteen can give their grown men points. . . . Very well——"

The war correspondent mused on his face with his nose between his knuckles.

"If a decent civilization," he said, "cannot produce better men for war than——"

He stopped with belated politeness. "I mean——"

"Than our open-air life," said the young lieutenant, politely.

"Exactly," said the war correspondent. "Then civilization has to stop."

"It looks like it," the young lieutenant admitted.

"Civilization has science, you know," said the war correspondent. "It invented and it makes the rifles and guns and things you use."

"Which our nice healthy hunters and stockmen and so on, rowdy-rowdy cow-punchers and nigger-whackers, can use ten times better than—— *What's that?*"

"What?" said the war correspondent, and then seeing his companion busy with his field-glass he produced his own. "Where?" said the war correspondent, sweeping the enemy's lines.

"It's nothing," said the young lieutenant, still looking.

"What's nothing?"

The young lieutenant put down his glass and pointed. "I thought I saw something there, behind the stems of those trees. Something black. What it was I don't know."

The war correspondent tried to get even by intense scrutiny.

"It wasn't anything," said the young lieutenant, rolling over to regard the darkling evening sky, and generalized: "There never will be anything any more for ever. Unless——"

The war correspondent looked inquiry.

"They may get their stomachs wrong, or something—living without proper drains."

A sound of bugles came from the tents behind. The war correspondent slid backward down the sand and stood up. "Boom!" came from somewhere far away to the left. "Halloa!" he said, hesitated, and crawled back to peer again. "Firing at this time is jolly bad manners."

The young lieutenant was incommunicative again for a space.

Then he pointed to the distant clump of trees again. "One of our big guns. They were firing at that," he said.

"The thing that wasn't anything?"

"Something over there, anyhow."

Both men were silent, peering through their glasses for a space. "Just when it's twilight," the lieutenant complained. He stood up.

"I might stay here a bit," said the war correspondent.

The lieutenant shook his head. "There's nothing to see," he apologized, and then went down to where his little squad of sun-brown, loose-limbed men had been yarning in the trench. The war correspondent stood up also, glanced for a moment at the business-like bustle below him, gave perhaps twenty seconds to those enigmatical trees again, then turned his face toward the camp.

He found himself wondering whether his editor would consider the story of how somebody thought he saw something black behind a clump of trees, and how a gun was fired at this illusion by somebody else, too trivial for public consumption.

"It's the only gleam of a shadow of interest," said the war correspondent, "for ten whole days.

"No," he said, presently; "I'll write that other article, 'Is War Played Out?'"

He surveyed the darkling lines in perspective, the tangle of trenches one behind another, one commanding another, which the defender had made ready. The shadows and mists swallowed up their receding contours, and here and there a lantern gleamed, and here and there knots of men were busy about small fires. "No troops on earth could do it," he said. . . .

He was depressed. He believed that there were other things in life better worth having than proficiency in war; he believed that in the heart of civilization, for all its stresses, its crushing concentrations of forces, its injustice and suffering, there lay something that might be the hope of the world, and the idea that any people by living in the open air, hunting perpetually, losing touch with books and art and all the things that intensify life, might hope to resist and break that great development to the end of time, jarred on his civilized soul.

Apt to his thought came a file of the defender-soldiers and passed him in the gleam of a swinging lamp that marked the way.

He glanced at their red-lit faces, and one shone out for a moment, a common type of face in the defender's ranks: ill-shaped nose, sensuous lips, bright clear eyes full of alert cunning, slouch hat cocked on one side and adorned with the peacock's plume of the rustic Don Juan turned soldier, a hard brown skin, a sinewy frame, an open, tireless stride, and a master's grip on the rifle.

The war correspondent returned their salutations and went on his way

"Louts," he whispered. "Cunning, elementary louts. And they are going to beat the townsmen at the game of war!"

From the red glow among the nearer tents came first one and then half-a-dozen hearty voices, bawling in a drawling unison the words of a particularly slab and sentimental patriotic song.

"Oh, *go* it!" muttered the war correspondent, bitterly.

II.

It was opposite the trenches called after Hackbone's Hut that the battle began. There the ground stretched broad and level between the lines, with scarcely shelter for a lizard, and it seemed to the startled, just-awakened men who came crowding into the trenches that this was one more proof of that green inexperience of the enemy of which they had heard so much. The war correspondent would not believe his ears at first, and swore that he and the war artist, who, still imperfectly roused, was trying to put on his boots by the light of a match held in his hand, were the victims of a common illusion. Then, after putting his head in a bucket of cold water, his intelligence came back as he towelled. He listened. "Gollys!" he said; "that's something more than scare firing this time. It's like ten thousand carts on a bridge of tin."

There came a sort of enrichment to that steady uproar. "Machine guns!" ——

Then, "Guns!"

The artist, with one boot on, thought to look at his watch, and went to it hopping.

"Half an hour from dawn," he said. "You were right about their attacking, after all. . . ."

The war correspondent came out of the tent, verifying the presence of chocolate in his pocket as he did so. He had to halt for a moment or so until his eyes were toned down to the night a little. "Pitch!" he said. He stood for a space to season his eyes before he felt justified in striking out for a black gap among the adjacent tents. The artist coming out behind him fell over a tent-rope. It was half-past two o'clock in the morning of the darkest night in time, and against a sky of dull black silk the enemy was talking searchlights, a wild jabber of searchlights. "He's trying to blind our riflemen," said the war correspondent with a flash, and waited for the artist and then set off with a sort of discreet haste again. "Whoa!" he said, presently. "Ditches!"

They stopped.

"It's the confounded searchlights," said the war correspondent.

They saw lanterns going to and fro, near by, and men falling in to march down to the trenches. They were for following them, and then the artist began to feel his night eyes. "If we scramble this," he said, "and it's only a drain, there's a clear run up to the ridge." And that way they took. Lights came and went in the tents behind, as the men turned out, and ever and again they came

to broken ground and staggered and stumbled. But in a little while they drew near the crest. Something that sounded like the impact of a very important railway accident happened in the air above them, and the shrapnel bullets seethed about them like a sudden handful of hail. "Right-ho!" said the war correspondent, and soon they judged they had come to the crest and stood in the midst of a world of great darkness and frantic glares, whose principal fact was sound.

Right and left of them and all about them was the uproar, an army-full of magazine fire, at first chaotic and monstrous, and then, eked out by little flashes and gleams and suggestions, taking the beginnings of a shape. It looked to the war correspondent as though the enemy must have attacked in line and with his whole force—in which case he was either being or was already annihilated.

"Dawn and the Dead," he said, with his instinct for headlines. He said this to himself, but afterwards by means of shouting, he conveyed an idea to the artist. "They must have meant it for a surprise," he said.

It was remarkable how the firing kept on. After a time he began to perceive a sort of rhythm in this inferno of noise. It would decline—decline perceptibly, droop towards something that was comparatively a pause—a pause of inquiry. "Aren't you all dead yet?" this pause seemed to say. The flickering fringe of rifle-flashes would become attenuated and broken, and the whack-bang of the enemy's big guns two miles away there would come up out of the deeps. Then suddenly, east or west of them, something would startle the rifles to a frantic outbreak again.

The war correspondent taxed his brain for some theory of conflict that would account for this, and was suddenly aware that the artist and he were vividly illuminated. He could see the ridge on which they stood, and before them in black outline a file of riflemen hurrying down towards the nearer trenches. It became visible that a light rain was falling, and farther away towards the enemy was a clear space with men—"our men?"—running across it in disorder. He saw one of those men throw up his hands and drop. And something else black and shining loomed up on the edge of the beam-coruscating flashes; and behind it and far away a calm, white eye regarded the world. "Whit, whit, whit," sang something in the air,

"SOMETHING ELSE BLACK AND SHINING LOOMED UP ON THE EDGE OF THE BEAM."

and then the artist was running for cover, with the war correspondent behind him. Bang came shrapnel, bursting close at hand as it seemed, and our two men were lying flat in a dip in the ground, and the light and everything had gone again, leaving a vast note of interrogation upon the night.

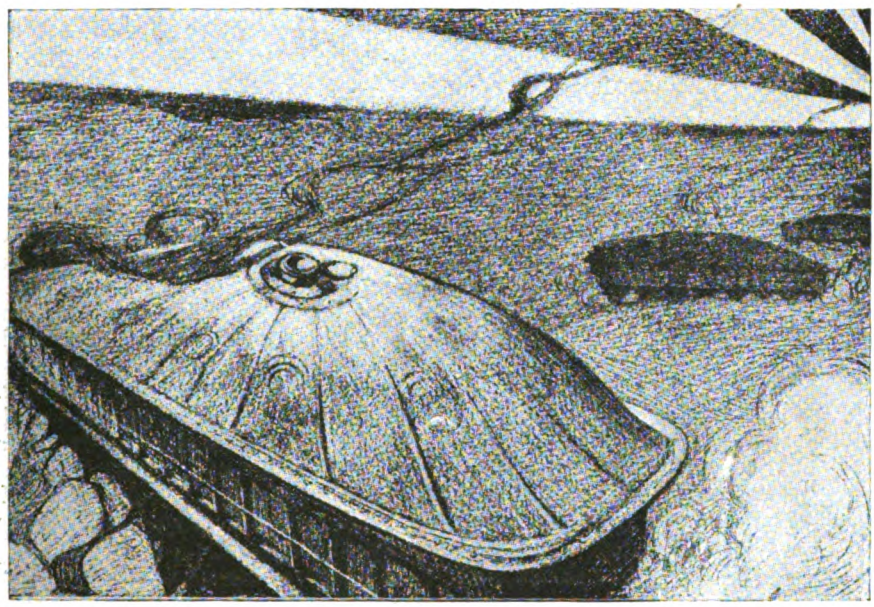
The war correspondent came within bawling range. "What the deuce was it? Shooting our men down!"

"Black," said the artist, "and like a fort. Not two hundred yards from the first trench."

And on its carcass the bullets must have been battering with more than the passionate violence of hail on a roof of tin.

Then in the twinkling of an eye the curtain of the dark had fallen again and the monster had vanished, but the crescendo of musketry marked its approach to the trenches.

They were beginning to talk about the thing to each other, when a flying bullet kicked dirt into the artist's face, and they decided abruptly to crawl down into the cover of the trenches. They had got down



"IT HAD THE EFFECT OF A LARGE AND CLUMSY BLACK INSECT."

He sought for comparisons in his mind. "Something between a big blockhouse and a giant's dish-cover," he said.

"And they were running!" said the war correspondent.

"*You'd* run if a thing like that, with a searchlight to help it, turned up like a prowling nightmare in the middle of the night."

They crawled to what they judged the edge of the dip and lay regarding the unfathomable dark. For a space they could distinguish nothing, and then a sudden convergence of the searchlights of both sides brought the strange thing out again.

In that flickering pallor it had the effect of a large and clumsy black insect, an insect the size of an ironclad cruiser, crawling obliquely to the first line of trenches and firing shots out of portholes in its back. with an unobtrusive persistence into the second line, before the dawn had grown clear enough for anything to be seen. They found themselves in a crowd of expectant riflemen, all noisily arguing about the thing that would happen next. The enemy's contrivance had done execution upon the outlying men, it seemed, but they did not believe it would do any more. "Come the day and we'll capture the lot of them," said a burly soldier.

"Them?" said the war correspondent.

"They say there's a regular string of 'em, crawling along the front of our lines. . . . Who cares?"

The darkness filtered away so imperceptibly that at no moment could one declare decisively that one could see. The searchlights ceased to sweep hither and thither. The enemy's monsters were dubious patches of darkness upon the dark, and then

no longer dubious, and so they crept out into distinctness. The war correspondent, munching chocolate absent-mindedly, beheld at last a spacious picture of battle under the cheerless sky, whose central focus was an array of fourteen or fifteen huge clumsy shapes lying in perspective on the very edge of the first line of trenches, at intervals of perhaps three hundred yards, and evidently firing down upon the crowded riflemen. They were so close in that the defender's guns had ceased, and only the first line of trenches was in action.

The second line commanded the first, and as the light grew, the war correspondent could make out the riflemen who were fighting these monsters, crouched in knots and crowds behind the transverse banks that crossed the trenches against the eventuality of an enfilade. The trenches close to the big machines were empty save for the crumpled suggestions of dead and wounded men; the defenders had been driven right and left as soon as the prow of this land ironclad had loomed up over the front of the trench. He produced his field-glass, and was immediately a centre of inquiry from the soldiers about him.

They wanted to look, they asked questions, and after he had announced that the men across the traverses seemed unable to advance or retreat, and were crouching under cover rather than fighting, he found it advisable to loan his glasses to a burly and incredulous corporal. He heard a strident voice, and found a lean and sallow soldier at his back talking to the artist.

"There's chaps down there caught," the man was saying. "If they retreat they got to expose themselves, and the fire's too straight. . . ."

"They aren't firing much, but every shot's a hit."

"Who?"

"The chaps in that thing. The men who're coming up——"

"Coming up where?"

"We're evacuating them trenches where we can. Our chaps are coming back up the zigzags . . . . No end of 'em hit. . . . But when we get clear our turn'll come. Rather! Those things won't be able to cross a trench or get into it; and before they can get back our guns'll smash 'em up. Smash 'em right up. See?" A brightness came into his eyes. "Then we'll have a go at the beggar inside," he said. . . .

The war correspondent thought for a moment, trying to realize the idea. Then he set himself to recover his field-glasses from the burly corporal. . . .

The daylight was getting clearer now. The clouds were lifting, and a gleam of lemon yellow amidst the level masses to the east portended sunrise. He looked again at the land ironclad. As he saw it in the bleak grey dawn, lying obliquely upon the slope and on the very lip of the foremost trench, the suggestion of a stranded vessel was very great indeed. It might have been from eighty to a hundred feet long—it was about two hundred and fifty yards away—its vertical side was ten feet high or so, smooth for that height, and then with a complex patterning under the eaves of its flattish turtle cover. This patterning was a close interlacing of portholes, rifle barrels, and telescope tubes—sham and real—indistinguishable one from the other. The thing had come into such a position as to enfilade the trench, which was empty now, so far as he could see, except for two or three crouching knots of men and the tumbled-looking dead. Behind it, across the plain, it had scored the grass with a train of linked impressions, like the dotted tracings sea-things leave in sand. Left and right of that track dead men and wounded men were scattered—men it had picked off as they fled back from their advanced positions in the searchlight glare from the invader's lines. And now it lay with its head projecting a little over the trench it had won, as if it were a single sentient thing planning the next phase of its attack. . . .

He lowered his glasses and took a more comprehensive view of the situation. These creatures of the night had evidently won the first line of trenches and the fight had come to a pause. In the increasing light he could make out by a stray shot or a chance exposure that the defender's marksmen were lying thick in the second and third line of trenches up towards the low crest of the position, and in such of the zigzags as gave them a chance of a converging fire. The men about him were talking of guns. "We're in the line of the big guns at the crest, but they'll soon shift one to pepper them," the lean man said, reassuringly.

"Whup," said the corporal.

"Bang! bang! bang! Whir-r-r-r-r!" it was a sort of nervous jump, and all the rifles were going off by themselves. The war correspondent found himself and the artist, two idle men crouching behind a line of preoccupied backs, of industrious men discharging magazines. The monster had moved. It continued to move regardless of the hail that splashed its skin with bright new specks

of lead. It was singing a mechanical little ditty to itself, "Tuf-tuf, tuf-tuf, tuf-tuf," and squirting out little jets of steam behind. It had humped itself up, as a limpet does before it crawls; it had lifted its skirt and displayed along the length of it—*feet!* They were thick, stumpy feet, between knobs and buttons in shape—flat, broad things, reminding one of the feet of elephants or the legs of caterpillars; and then, as the skirt rose higher, the war correspondent, scrutinizing the thing through his glasses again, saw that these feet hung, as it were, on the rims of wheels. His thoughts whirled back to Victoria Street, Westminster, and he saw himself in the piping times of peace, seeking matter for an interview.

"Mr. — Mr. Diplock," he said; "and he called them Pedrails .... Fancy meeting them here!"

The marksman beside him raised his head and shoulders in a speculative mood to fire more certainly —it seemed so natural to assume the attention of the monster must be distracted by this trench before it—and was suddenly knocked backwards by a bullet through his neck. His feet flew up, and he vanished out of the margin of the watcher's field of vision. The war correspondent grovelled tighter, but after a glance behind him at a painful little confusion, he resumed his field-glass, for the thing was putting down its feet one after the other, and hoisting itself farther and farther over the trench. Only a bullet in the head could have stopped him looking just then.

The lean man with the strident voice ceased firing to turn and reiterate his point. "They can't possibly cross," he bawled. "They——"

"Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!"—drowned everything.

The lean man continued speaking for a word or so, then gave it up, shook his head to enforce the impossibility of anything crossing a trench like the one below, and resumed business once more.

"THE MEN ABOUT HIM STUCK TO THEIR POSITION AND FIRED FURIOUSLY."

And all the while that great bulk was crossing. When the war correspondent turned his glass on it again it had bridged the trench, and its queer feet were rasping away at the farther bank, in the attempt to get a hold there. It got its hold. It continued to crawl until the greater bulk of it was over the trench — until it was all over. Then it paused for a moment, adjusted its skirt a little nearer the ground, gave an unnerving "toot, toot," and came on abruptly at a pace of, perhaps, six miles an hour straight up the gentle slope towards our observer.

The war correspondent raised himself on his elbow and looked a natural inquiry at the artist.

For a moment the men about him stuck to their position and fired furiously. Then the lean man in a mood of precipitancy slid backwards, and the war correspondent said "Come along" to the artist, and led the movement along the trench.

As they dropped down, the vision of a hillside of trench being rushed by a dozen vast cockroaches disappeared for a space, and

instead was one of a narrow passage, crowded with men, for the most part receding, though one or two turned or halted. He never turned back to see the nose of the monster creep over the brow of the trench; he never even troubled to keep in touch with the artist. He heard the "whit" of bullets about him soon enough, and saw a man before him stumble and drop, and then he was one of a furious crowd fighting to get into a transverse zigzag ditch that enabled the defenders to get under cover up and down the hill. It was like a theatre panic. He gathered from signs and fragmentary words that on ahead another of these monsters had also won to the second trench.

He lost his interest in the general course of the battle for a space altogether; he became simply a modest egotist, in a mood of hasty circumspection, seeking the farthest rear, amidst a dispersed multitude of disconcerted riflemen similarly employed. He scrambled down through trenches, he took his courage in both hands and sprinted across the open, he had moments of panic when it seemed madness not to be quadrupedal, and moments of shame when he stood up and faced about to see how the fight was going. And he was one of many thousand very similar men that morning. On the ridge he halted in a knot of scrub, and was for a few minutes almost minded to stop and see things out.

The day was now fully come. The grey sky had changed to blue, and of all the cloudy masses of the dawn there remained only a few patches of dissolving fleeciness. The world below was bright and singularly clear. The ridge was not, perhaps, more than a hundred feet or so above the general plain, but in this flat region it sufficed to give the effect of extensive view. Away on the north side of the ridge, little and far, were the camps, the ordered wagons, all the gear of a big army; with officers galloping about and men doing aimless things. Here and there men were falling-in, however, and the cavalry was forming up on the plain beyond the tents. The bulk of men who had been in the trenches were still on the move to the rear, scattered like sheep without a shepherd over the farther slopes. Here and there were little rallies and attempts to wait and do—something vague; but the general drift was away from any concentration. Then on the southern side was the elaborate lacework of trenches and defences, across which these iron turtles, fourteen of them spread out over a line of perhaps three miles, were now advancing as fast as a man could trot, and methodically shooting down and breaking up any persistent knots of resistance. Here and there stood little clumps of men, outflanked and unable to get away, showing the white flag, and the

"HERE AND THERE STOOD LITTLE CLUMPS OF MEN, OUTFLANKED AND UNABLE TO GET AWAY."

invader's cyclist infantry was advancing now across the open, in open order but unmolested, to complete the work of the machines. So far as the day went, the defenders already looked a beaten army. A mechanism that was effectually ironclad against bullets, that could at a pinch cross a thirty-foot trench, and that seemed able to shoot out rifle-bullets with unerring precision, was clearly an inevitable victor against anything but rivers, precipices, and guns.

He looked at his watch. "Half-past four! Lord! What things can happen in two hours. Here's the whole blessed army being walked over, and at half-past two——

"And even now our blessed louts haven't done a thing with their guns!"

He scanned the ridge right and left of him with his glasses. He turned again to the nearest land ironclad, advancing now obliquely to him and not three hundred yards away, and then scanned the ground over which he must retreat if he was not to be captured.

"They'll do nothing," he said, and glanced again at the enemy.

And then from far away to the left came the thud of a gun, followed very rapidly by a rolling gun-fire.

He hesitated and decided to stay.

III.

THE defender had relied chiefly upon his rifles in the event of an assault. His guns he kept concealed at various points upon and behind the ridge ready to bring them into action against any artillery preparations for an attack on the part of his antagonist. The situation had rushed upon him with the dawn, and by the time the gunners had their guns ready for motion, the land ironclads were already in among the foremost trenches. There is a natural reluctance to fire into one's own broken men, and many of the guns, being intended simply to fight an advance of the enemy's artillery, were not in positions to hit anything in the second line of trenches. After that the advance of the land ironclads was swift. The defender-general found himself suddenly called upon to invent a new sort of warfare, in which guns were to fight alone amidst broken and retreating infantry. He had scarcely thirty minutes in which to think it out. He did not respond to the call, and what happened that morning was that the advance of the land ironclads forced the fight, and each gun and battery made what play its circumstances dictated. For the most part it was poor play.

Some of the guns got in two or three shots, some one or two, and the percentage of misses was unusually high. The howitzers, of course, did nothing. The land ironclads in each case followed much the same tactics. As soon as a gun came into play the monster turned itself almost end-on, so as to get the biggest chance of a glancing hit, and made not for the gun, but for the nearest point on its flank from which the gunners could be shot down. Few of the hits scored were very effectual; only one of the things was disabled, and that was the one that fought the three batteries attached to the brigade on the left wing. Three that were hit when close upon the guns were clean shot through without being put out of action. Our war correspondent did not see that one momentary arrest of the tide of victory on the left; he saw only the very ineffectual fight of half-battery 96B close at hand upon his right. This he watched some time beyond the margin of safety.

Just after he heard the three batteries opening up upon his left he became aware of the thud of horses' hoofs from the sheltered side of the slope, and presently saw first one and then two other guns galloping into position along the north side of the ridge, well out of sight of the great bulk that was now creeping obliquely towards the crest and cutting up the lingering infantry beside it and below, as it came.

The half-battery swung round into line—each gun describing its curve—halted, unlimbered, and prepared for action. . . .

"Bang!"

The land ironclad had become visible over the brow of the hill, and just visible as a long black back to the gunners. It halted, as though it hesitated.

The two remaining guns fired, and then their big antagonist had swung round and was in full view, end-on, against the sky, coming at a rush.

The gunners became frantic in their haste to fire again. They were so near the war correspondent could see the expression of their excited faces through his field-glass. As he looked he saw a man drop, and realized for the first time that the ironclad was shooting.

For a moment the big black monster crawled with an accelerated pace towards the furiously active gunners. Then, as if moved by a generous impulse, it turned its full broadside to their attack, and scarcely forty yards away from them. The war correspondent turned his field-glass back to the gunners and

perceived it was now shooting down the men about the guns with the most deadly rapidity.

Just for a moment it seemed splendid, and then it seemed horrible. The gunners were dropping in heaps about their guns. To lay a hand on a gun was death. "Bang!" went the gun on the left, a hopeless miss, and that was the only second shot the half-battery fired. In another moment half-a-dozen surviving artillerymen were holding up their hands amidst a scattered muddle of dead and wounded men, and the fight was done.

The war correspondent hesitated between stopping in his scrub and waiting for an opportunity to surrender decently, or taking to an adjacent gully he had discovered. If he surrendered it was certain he would get no copy off; while, if he escaped, there were all sorts of chances. He decided to follow the gully, and take the first offer in the confusion beyond the camp of picking up a horse.

"HE DECIDED TO FOLLOW THE GULLY."

IV.

SUBSEQUENT authorities have found fault with the first land ironclads in many particulars, but assuredly they served their purpose on the day of their appearance. They were essentially long, narrow, and very strong steel frameworks carrying the engines, and borne upon eight pairs of big pedrail wheels, each about ten feet in diameter, each a driving wheel and set upon long axles free to swivel round a common axis. This arrangement gave them the maximum of adaptability to the contours of the ground. They crawled level along the ground with one foot high upon a hillock and another deep in a depression, and they could hold themselves erect and steady sideways upon even a steep hillside. The engineers directed the engines under the command of the captain, who had look-out points at small ports all round the upper edge of the adjustable skirt of twelve-inch iron-plating which protected the whole affair, and who could also raise or depress a conning-tower set about the portholes through the centre of the iron top cover. The riflemen each occupied a small cabin of peculiar construction, and these cabins were slung along the sides of and before and behind the great main framework, in a manner suggestive of the slinging of the seats of an Irish jaunting-car. Their rifles, however, were very different pieces of apparatus from the simple mechanisms in the hands of their adversaries.

These were in the first place automatic, ejected their cartridges and loaded again from a magazine each time they fired, until the ammunition store was at an end, and they had the most remarkable sights imaginable, sights which threw a bright little camera-obscura picture into the light-tight box in which the rifleman sat below. This camera-obscura picture was marked with two crossed lines, and whatever was covered by the intersection of these two lines, that the rifle hit. The sighting was ingeniously contrived. The rifleman stood at the table with a thing like an elaboration of a draughtsman's dividers in his hand, and he opened and closed these dividers, so that they were always at the apparent height—if it was an ordinary-sized man—of the man he wanted to kill. A little twisted strand of wire like an electric-light wire ran from this implement up to the gun, and as the dividers opened and shut the sights went up or down. Changes in the clearness of the atmosphere, due to changes of moisture, were met by an ingenious use of that meteorologically sensitive substance, catgut, and when the land ironclad moved forward the sights got a compensatory deflection in the direction of its motion. The rifleman stood up in his pitch-dark chamber and watched the little picture.

before him. One hand held the dividers for judging distance, and the other grasped a big knob like a door-handle. As he pushed this knob about the rifle above swung to correspond, and the picture passed to and fro like an agitated panorama. When he saw a man he wanted to shoot he brought him up to the cross-lines, and then pressed a finger upon a little push like an electric bell-push, conveniently placed in the centre of the knob. Then the man was shot. If by any chance the rifleman missed his target he moved the knob a trifle, or readjusted his dividers, pressed the push, and got him the second time.

"THE PICTURE PASSED TO AND FRO LIKE AN AGITATED PANORAMA.

This rifle and its sights protruded from a porthole, exactly like a great number of other portholes that ran in a triple row under the eaves of the cover of the land ironclad. Each porthole displayed a rifle and sight in dummy, so that the real ones could only be hit by a chance shot, and if one was, then the young man below said "Pshaw!" turned on an electric light, lowered the injured instrument into his camera, replaced the injured part, or put up a new rifle if the injury was considerable.

You must conceive these cabins as hung clear above the swing of the axles, and inside the big wheels upon which the great elephant-like feet were hung, and behind these cabins along the centre of the monster ran a central gallery into which they opened, and along which worked the big compact engines. It was like a long passage into which this throbbing machinery had been packed, and the captain stood about the middle, close to the ladder that led to his conning-tower, and directed the silent, alert engineers—for the most part by signs. The throb and noise of the engines mingled with the reports of the rifles and the intermittent clangour of the bullet hail upon the armour. Ever and again he would touch the wheel that raised his conning-tower, step up his ladder until his engineers could see nothing of him above the waist, and then come down again with orders. Two small electric lights were all the illumination of this space—they were placed to make him most clearly visible to his subordinates; the air was thick with the smell of oil and petrol, and had the war correspondent been suddenly transferred from the spacious dawn outside to the bowels of this apparatus he would have thought himself fallen into another world.

The captain, of course, saw both sides of the battle. When he raised his head into his conning-tower there were the dewy sunrise, the amazed and disordered trenches, the flying and falling soldiers, the depressed-looking groups of prisoners, the beaten guns; when he bent down again to signal "Half speed," "Quarter speed," "Half circle round towards the right," or what not, he was in the oil-smelling twilight of the ill-lit engine-room. Close beside him on either side was the mouthpiece of a speaking-tube, and ever and again he would direct one side or other of his strange craft to "Concentrate fire forward on gunners," or to "Clear out trench about a hundred yards on our right front."

He was a young man, healthy enough but by no means sun-tanned, and of a type of feature and expression that prevails in His Majesty's Navy: alert, intelligent, quiet. He

and his engineers and his riflemen all went about their work, calm and reasonable men. They had none of that flapping strenuousness of the half-wit in a hurry, that excessive strain upon the blood-vessels, that hysteria of effort which is so frequently regarded as the proper state of mind for heroic deeds.

For the enemy these young engineers were defeating they felt a certain qualified pity and a quite unqualified contempt. They regarded these big, healthy men they were shooting down precisely as these same big, healthy men might regard some inferior kind of nigger. They despised them for making war; despised their bawling patriotisms and their emotionality profoundly; despised them, above all, for the petty cunning and the almost brutish want of imagination their method of fighting displayed. "If they *must* make war," these young men thought, "why in thunder don't they do it like sensible men?" They resented the assumption that their own side was too stupid to do anything more than play their enemy's game, that they were going to play this costly folly according to the rules of unimaginative men. They resented being forced to the trouble of making man-killing machinery; resented the alternative of having to massacre these people or endure their truculent yappings; resented the whole unfathomable imbecility of war.

Meanwhile, with something of the mechanical precision of a good clerk posting a ledger, the riflemen moved their knobs and pressed their buttons. . . .

The captain of Land Ironclad Number Three had halted on the crest close to his captured half-battery. His lined-up prisoners stood hard by and waited for the cyclists behind to come for them. He surveyed the victorious morning through his conning-tower.

He read the general's signals. "Five and Four are to keep among the guns to the left and prevent any attempt to recover them. Seven and Eleven and Twelve, stick to the guns you have got; Seven, get into position to command the guns taken by Three. Then we're to do something else, are we? Six and One, quicken up to about ten miles an hour and walk round behind that camp to the levels near the river—we shall bag the whole crowd of them," interjected the young man. "Ah, here we are! Two and Three, Eight and Nine, Thirteen and Fourteen, space out to a thousand yards, wait for the word, and then go slowly to cover the advance of the cyclist infantry against any charge of mounted troops. That's all right. But where's Ten? Halloa! Ten to repair and get movable as soon as possible. They've broken up Ten!"

The discipline of the new war machines was business-like rather than pedantic, and the head of the captain came down out of the conning-tower to tell his men. "I say, you chaps there. They've broken up Ten. Not badly, I think; but anyhow, he's stuck."

But that still left thirteen of the monsters in action to finish up the broken army.

The war correspondent stealing down his gully looked back and saw them all lying along the crest and talking fluttering congratulatory flags to one another. Their iron sides were shining golden in the light of the rising sun.

V.

THE private adventures of the war correspondent terminated in surrender about one o'clock in the afternoon, and by that time he had stolen a horse, pitched off it, and narrowly escaped being rolled upon; found the brute had broken its leg, and shot it with his revolver. He had spent some hours in the company of a squad of dispirited riflemen, had quarrelled with them about topography at last, and gone off by himself in a direction that should have brought him to the banks of the river and didn't. Moreover, he had eaten all his chocolate and found nothing in the whole world to drink. Also, it had become extremely hot. From behind a broken, but attractive, stone wall he had seen far away in the distance the defender-horsemen trying to charge cyclists in open order, with land ironclads outflanking them on either side. He had discovered that cyclists could retreat over open turf before horsemen with a sufficient margin of speed to allow of frequent dismounts and much terribly-effective sharpshooting; and he had a sufficient persuasion that those horsemen, having charged their hearts out, had halted just beyond his range of vision and surrendered. He had been urged to sudden activity by a forward movement of one of those machines that had threatened to enfilade his wall. He had discovered a fearful blister on his heel.

He was now in a scrubby gravelly place, sitting down and meditating on his pocket-handkerchief, which had in some extraordinary way become in the last twenty-four hours extremely ambiguous in hue. "It's the whitest thing I've got," he said.

He had known all along that the enemy was east, west, and south of him, but when he heard war ironclads Numbers One and Six

talking in their measured, deadly way not half a mile to the north he decided to make his own little unconditional peace without any further risks. He was for hoisting his white flag to a bush and taking up a position of modest obscurity near it until someone came along. He became aware of voices, clatter, and the distinctive noises of a body of horse, quite near, and he put his handkerchief in his pocket again and went to see what was going forward.

The sound of firing ceased, and then as he drew near he heard the deep sounds of many simple, coarse, but hearty and noble-hearted soldiers of the old school swearing with vigour.

He emerged from his scrub upon a big level plain, and far away a fringe of trees marked the banks of the river.

In the centre of the picture was a still intact road bridge, and a big railway bridge a little to the right. Two land ironclads rested, with a general air of being long, harmless sheds, in a pose of anticipatory peacefulness right and left of the picture, completely commanding two miles and more of the river levels. Emerged and halted a little from the scrub was the remainder of the defender's cavalry, dusty, a little disordered and obviously annoyed, but still a very fine show of men. In the middle distance three or four men and horses were receiving medical attendance, and a little nearer a knot of officers regarded the distant novelties in mechanism with profound distaste. Everyone was very distinctly aware of the twelve other ironclads, and of the multitude of townsmen soldiers, on bicycles or afoot, encumbered now by prisoners and captured war-gear but otherwise thoroughly effective, who were sweeping like a great net in their rear.

"Checkmate," said the war correspondent, walking out into the open. "But I surrender in the best of company. Twenty-four hours ago I thought war was impossible—and these beggars have captured the whole blessed army! Well! Well!" He thought of his talk with the young lieutenant. "If there's no end to the surprises of science, the civilized people have it, of course. As long as their science keeps going they will necessarily be ahead of open-country men. Still. . . ."

He wondered for a space what might have happened to the young lieutenant.

The war correspondent was one of those inconsistent people who always want the beaten side to win. When he saw all these burly, sun-tanned horsemen, disarmed and dismounted and lined up: when he saw their horses unskilfully led away by the singularly not equestrian cyclists to whom they had surrendered; when he saw these truncated Paladins watching this scandalous sight, he forgot altogether that he had called these men "cunning louts" and wished them beaten not four-and-twenty hours ago. A month ago he had seen that regiment in its pride going forth to war, and had been told of its terrible prowess, how it could charge in open order with each man firing from his saddle, and sweep before it anything else that ever came out to battle in any sort of order, foot or horse. And it had had to fight a few score of young men in atrociously unfair machines!

"Manhood *versus* Machinery" occurred to him as a suitable headline. Journalism curdles all one's mind to phrases.

He strolled as near the lined-up prisoners as the sentinels seemed disposed to permit and surveyed them and compared their sturdy proportions with those of their lightly-built captors.

"Smart degenerates," he muttered. "Anæmic cockneydom."

The surrendered officers came quite close to him presently, and he could hear the colonel's high-pitched tenor. The poor gentleman had spent three years of arduous toil upon the best material in the world perfecting that shooting from the saddle charge, and he was inquiring with phrases of blasphemy, natural in the circumstances, what one could be expected to do against this suitably consigned ironmongery.

"Guns," said someone.

"Big guns they can walk round. You can't shift big guns to keep pace with them, and little guns in the open they rush. I saw 'em rushed. You might do a surprise now and then — assassinate the brutes, perhaps——"

"You might make things like 'em."

"What? *More* ironmongery? Us?. . ."

"I'll call my article," meditated the war correspondent, "'Mankind *versus* Ironmongery,' and quote the old boy at the beginning."

And he was much too good a journalist to spoil his contrast by remarking that the half-dozen comparatively slender young men in blue pyjamas who were standing about their victorious land ironclad, drinking coffee and eating biscuits, had also in their eyes and carriage something not altogether degraded below the level of a man.

The Sense of Humour—Where is it Keenest?

THE OPINIONS OF SOME OF OUR LEADING ENTERTAINERS.

Illustrated by Thomas Henry.

THE sense of humour, as we know, varies much among individuals. Some have it not; others are endowed with it even too generously. Is the same thing true of communities? Ireland is traditionally supposed to have a surplus and Scotland a deficit in this gift of the gods.

But has the tradition any basis in fact? And what of England and Wales and the several parts thereof, north, south, east, and west? It is a difficult question on which to present evidence. It occurred to us, however, that if anybody had the means of forming an opinion on the subject it should be the popular entertainers who have toured the United Kingdom, seeking to move the crowd to laughter. Accordingly we have put to some of the most representative of their number: "In what part of the United Kingdom, according to your experience, is there the keenest sense of humour?"

"IMITATING THE MAN WHO TOOK ROUND THE PLATE AT OUR CHURCH."

HARRY TATE.

Mr. Harry Tate gave his vote for Yorkshire, with Cockneys—"real Cockneys, not the Londoners of the West-end"—as a good second. "But wherever you are," he said, "you must adapt your humour to your audience. You cannot expect every audience to appreciate the same joke. For instance, my little joke about the Forth Bridge. 'What did you think of the Forth Bridge?' a tourist is asked. 'It is very fine, but then Nature always is so wonderful,' he replies. Well, in Scotland that always goes down splendidly. But in the South of England, where perhaps nobody in the audience has seen the Forth Bridge and very few have heard of it, the joke is liable to fall flat."

"NO, I CAN'T DO THAT, BUT I'LL DRIVE YOU TO BEDLAM!"

Mr. Harry Tate is always studying his models in the streets, and always ready to mimic anything characteristic. "I have always mimicked people ever since I was a nipper," he tells us. "I remember my mother scolding me for imitating the man who took round the plate at our church," and the comedian gave an impersonation of a pompous churchwarden going along the pews with a life-like smirk that compelled one to laugh.

"Just now I have been experimenting with taxi-cab drivers. It is extraordinary how differently they receive a request late at night to drive you to Tunbridge Wells. One even will turn round and say, 'Tunbridge Wells! Where's that, guv'nor?' 'Oh, about forty miles from here.' 'No, I can't do that distance.' 'Well, then, drive me to Victoria,' and you get into the cab without the man having the least suspicion of a joke. Another man sees at once that you are pulling his leg, and replies facetiously, 'Tunbridge Wells. No, I can't do that, but I'll drive you to Bedlam!"

NELSON KEYS.

After a little reflection, Mr. Nelson Keys, who at the time of this interview was the bright particular star in "Bric-à-Brac" at the Palace Theatre, said he had found the keenest sense of humour at Cambridge, when the audience consisted mainly of undergraduates. He had played there only once, but the recollection of the way in which his audience had taken every "point" in his performance would be to him a joy for ever. It was in "When Knights Were Bold," and he was taking James Welch's part.

"It is really extraordinary how, without any apparent reason," Mr. Keys added, "audiences differ in their sense of humour. In 'The Dairymaids,' you may remember, I played the part of a dapper naval lieutenant, whilst another man played that of a rough, hearty A.B. In some places I got pretty well all the laughter and in other places the other man did.

"NEVER HAS THE SONG BEEN BETTER APPRECIATED."

"Then the temperament of an audience seems so different at different times, and in somewhat inexplicable ways. On the night of Lord Kitchener's death, for instance, when one expected to find the audience in the doldrums, it was, on the contrary, full of irrepressible appreciation. It roared with laughter at everything. I can only suppose it was the effect of reaction after the shock of the terrible news earlier in the day."

ALFRED LESTER.

Mr. Alfred Lester, at the Alhambra, in an interval of his highly successful performance as one of the "Bing Boys," was emphatic in his appreciation of London as exhibiting the keenest sense of humour. And he has had an exceptional experience on which to base this opinion. Whilst he has toured throughout the United Kingdom, he has probably played in London continuously for a longer period than any other living comedian. "The Arcadians," with his famous "Always Merry and Bright" character, ran for two years and three months, during which period Mr. Lester was scarcely ever out of the cast.

"London," said Mr. Lester, "is so ready and eager in its appreciation of humour. In the North of England I think they prefer a more unctuous humour, and they are slower but perhaps more thorough in their enjoyment of a joke. Speaking of my song, 'Always Merry and Bright,' I spent four days at the Front recently and sang one night in a barn crowded with Tommies who, after a rest, were to go into the trenches in the morning. When I had sung the songs I had chosen they shouted for 'Always Merry and Bright.' I didn't think a song with such lines as

> Cheer up, Cully, you'll soon be dead.
> A short life and a gay one,

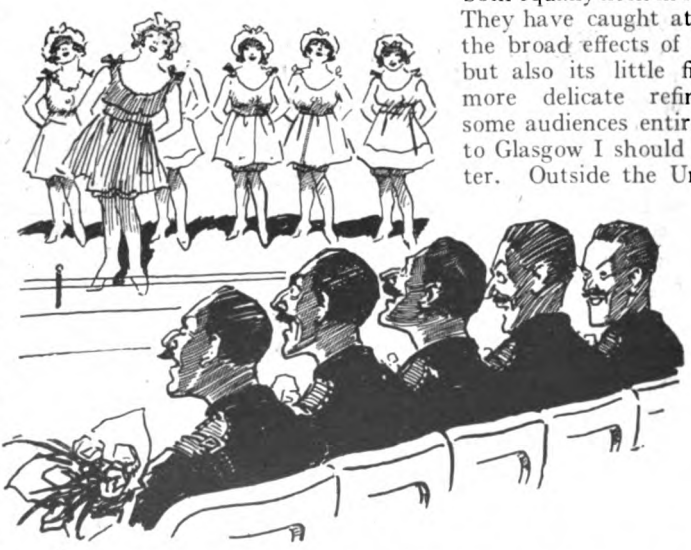
was quite the right thing for men who had to face death in the morning, but they insisted, and I had to sing it, and never has the song been better appreciated.

"It is not an unmixed blessing to have

made a big hit on the stage," Mr. Lester continued. "There is afterwards always the strain of trying to live up to your reputation. I believe my happiest time was when I was on tour in the country with a small salary and the ambition of one day doing something big. But in London, at any rate, audiences are very pleasant and tolerant. They seem to understand that you cannot always be at your best, and that all your parts cannot suit you equally well."

GEORGE FORMBY.

"In my opinion," said Mr. George Formby, in his dressing-room at Drury Lane during the run of "Razzle-Dazzle," "the larger the town the keener the sense of humour, and therefore I put London first. Of course, I have never had more enthusiastic audiences than in Manchester, but this may be because I am a Lancashire man, and perform in the Lancashire dialect. When I speak of London, I mean West-end audiences, not simply Cockney audiences of the East-end and the South of London. The people who come to the stalls in evening dress seem to appreciate the rough, homely humour of the Lancashire dialect because to them it is so fresh and unconventional. At the same time, you must remember that I am careful to tone down the dialect so as to make it easily understood. The reason why some dialect artistes, and also some dialect plays, do not succeed is, I think, because they are largely unintelligible to audiences outside Lancashire—the dialect is rendered in too pure and unadulterated a form.



"THE AUDIENCE EVIDENTLY CAME FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF ADMIRING THE ENGLISH TYPE OF BEAUTY."

"I have travelled all over the country, including Scotland and Ireland, and everywhere I have found audiences interested and amused by the Lancashire dialect, although, of course, they appreciate it also if you can put a little local colour into your performance. What I should like best of all is the chance of creating a part in a really good Lancashire play. Once in Glasgow, more by way of joke than anything else, I was allowed to play for one night the principal part in Stanley Houghton's 'A Daughter of the House.' I am told that my performance was a great success, and although my name did not appear in the programme, and every effort was made to keep the secret, people next day were declaring that the part must have been taken by George Formby."

G. P. HUNTLEY.

After a little reflection, in the midst of which he pointed out that during recent years he had played mostly in London, Mr. G. P. Huntley said that Glasgow stood first in his estimation for its keen appreciation of humour.

"I have appeared in Glasgow," he said, "at the theatres and at the halls, and I have also played there in pantomime. As you know, the music-hall audience is quite different from the theatre audience, but I have found both equally keen in sense of humour. They have caught at once not only the broad effects of a performance, but also its little fine points and more delicate refinements which some audiences entirely miss. Next to Glasgow I should place Manchester. Outside the United Kingdom, throughout the world as I have travelled it, I think I found South Australia the keenest in enjoying humour. No one could wish for more responsive audiences than those I had in South Australia."

In the course of further conversation a chance reference to Russia reminded Mr. Huntley of the least appreciative audiences. "Those I experienced in Petrograd," he said, "when I went there some years ago with the Gaiety Company, playing its repertoire at that time. We had very fine audiences, and at the beginning we did our best, but they

sat quite stolid throughout the funniest scenes, only giving us loud applause at the end of each act. Eventually we came to the conclusion that nobody understood a word we were saying or singing, and this, indeed, proved to be the case, for we used to carry on little conversations in the midst of the performance and make all sorts of jokes of our own without the least notice being taken. On Friday nights, however, a number of the English colony in Petrograd used to come to the theatre, and then, of course, we had to be on our best behaviour. On the other nights the audience, which consisted largely of military and Government officials, evidently came for the sole purpose of admiring the English type of beauty—and there were some very beautiful girls in the company. I remember that when I spoke about the stolidity of the audiences to an English friend in Petrograd he had the assurance to say, 'Well, you know, they hardly know what they want here. Even if you had played well they wouldn't have been more appreciative.'"

"OF ALL AUDIENCES, THE GALLERY GIRLS LAUGH AND APPLAUD MOST HEARTILY."

LAURI DE FRECE.

Mr. Lauri de Frece, when face to face with the question in his dressing-room at Daly's Theatre, was inclined to think that the sense of humour did not vary so much with places as with time, sex, class, and other factors.

"As regards time," he remarked, "I am quite certain that a *matinée* audience has its sense of humour much less developed than an evening audience. It may be that a good dinner has something to do with the difference. Then there is the element of sex. Women form the larger proportion of *matinée* audiences, and ladies, as a rule, are very sparing of laughter and applause. The 'gallery girls' are an exception in this matter of sex. But then they are such enthusiastic playgoers; a gallery girl will come all the way from Manchester in order to be present at a 'first night.' Of all audiences they will laugh and applaud most heartily. The very worst audience, on the other hand, for appreciating a joke is that of a charity *matinée*—they will sit stolid through a scene that has convulsed the previous night's audience."

While Mr. de Frece had some difficulty in deciding where he had experienced the keenest sense of humour, it was quite easy for him to remember the reverse.

"I played a week in 'The Cingalee' at Bath some time ago, and did not get a real laugh out of my audience until the Saturday, and then, I am sorry to say, it had fatal consequences."

"Fatal consequences!"

"Yes, it was in the scene in which Peggy, dressed in bathing costume, asks me, 'What do I look like?' Usually I answered, 'Oh, like a rabbit,' or something of that sort. But on this occasion an idea came to me, and I said, 'Like a Pump Room attendant.' The local 'hit' told at once, and there was an outburst of laughter, led by an old gentleman in the stalls. This old gentleman laughed so heartily that he broke a blood-vessel and had to be taken out. The unaccustomed shock of laughter was too much for him—and, unhappily, he died from the effects of it.

"Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Dundee have given me excellent audiences—but Aberdeen! Oh, Aberdeen! They call it the granite city—and its sense of humour is as hard as granite! I believe I got only one good laugh there, and that was in 'The Balkan Princess,' when I interpolated into a song beginning 'It's a very hard life indeed' the line, 'When it comes to making laugh in Aberdeen,' and it was something to find that they could laugh against themselves.

"Birmingham has a very keen sense of humour—that is because of the Jewish element there; as you know, the Jews are

always excellent playgoers. Liverpool is also very good, but on the whole I think I must give first place to Manchester. And Manchester is the best possible test for London—what goes down well at Manchester is sure to take well in London."

Like most other comedians, Mr. de Frece gets some of the best effects from the "gags" introduced at the last moment. He told how, in reading the newspapers, he is always on the look-out for possibilities of this kind. Thus, after reading of the suspension of the *Globe*, he introduced into the next performance of "Betty" a bit of dialogue something like this:—

"I saw the eclipse in the Strand."

"No! What, has there been an eclipse?"

"Yes; didn't you know? The *Globe* was wholly obscured."

This made a great hit, as did a reference to the German submarine U.C.5 off the Embankment. The comedian was telling a young lady in the country about the sights of London:—

"You must be sure to go on the Embankment."

"Why the Embankment? What sights should I see there?"

"Why, U.C.5."

On the other hand, an improvisation about the Daylight Saving Bill fell rather flat, probably because the general public had forgotten the name of its original promoter—Mr. Willett—which was the subject of a pun.

R. G. KNOWLES.

Probably no living entertainer has travelled more both in the United Kingdom and across the seas than Mr. R. G. Knowles. You think this almost as soon as you enter his flat at Portland Court, W., where at every turn the eye alights upon some souvenir or trophy of his journeying from China to Peru. As the result, strange to say, it is his firm opinion that the sense of humour is quite equally distributed not only in this country but throughout the civilized world. "Individuals differ, but in the mass it is my belief that mankind is pretty much the same all over the world as regards sense of humour, as well as most other things. In telling a story I have even made a Chinaman laugh, although whether he laughed because of what I was saying or because the other people did I do not know.

"As regards this country, I have never found any difference, east or west, north or south. I know Scotland is traditionally supposed to be slow in seeing a joke, but this does not tally with my experience. When I first went to Scotland I was advised by friends to speak slowly or my audiences would not catch on to the story. Well, I made my first appearance in Glasgow, and I spoke in my usual manner, which, as you know, is—well, not exactly slow. After a few moments a youth in the gallery shouted 'Rats!' I turned towards him and said, 'Well, take your muzzle off and go for them—you're a Scotch terrier!' The audience roared—and Glasgow was won.

"Where audiences differ, I think, is not in the sense of humour but in the manifestation of it—and some members of my profession may perhaps confuse the two things. At one place an audience will only smile, whilst at another it would chuckle and at a third guffaw. But it does not follow that there is any difference in the enjoyment of the joke, only in the method of expressing this enjoyment. Then undoubtedly an audience's sense of humour is not so keen sometimes as at other times. A man who has drunk a bottle of champagne at a big dinner is not so appreciative as one who is going home after the performance to a modest supper. Perhaps the worst audience of all—at any rate, for my kind of humour—is at the second house of a Saturday night, when the men are tired after a hard week's work and have probably had rather more beer than is good for them. But for such an audience, of course, one must make allowances. Speaking generally, I have found my audiences equally ready in seeing the point of a story—and unless it is seen at once the story is no good—alike in busy manufacturing cities or quiet country towns."

"A MAN WHO HAS DRUNK A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE IS NOT APPRECIATIVE."

"LITTLE TICH."

"Little Tich," at his flat in Bedford Court Mansions, replied to the leading question without a moment's hesitation. "London, the West-end of London, is without a doubt the keenest in its sense of humour. I know some people say that a West-end audience is *blasé*, but I have never found it so. Yes, I would give my vote for London against the rest of the world. Next to London I should say Australia—the Australians, in my experience, are exceedingly quick in seeing a joke.

"As regards some other places I have visited I dare not print what I think of their sense of humour. For instance, some time ago I was doing my serpentine dance in a town which shall be nameless. As you may remember, in the course of the performance I lose control of the skirt and I tug away trying to get hold of the loose ends. The next day it was common gossip in the town that I had been trying to catch a flea on the stage!"

"'DISGUSTING!' 'YES, DEAR, BUT I BELIEVE SHE'S AN AMERICAN!'"

"Little Tich" was in the midst of rehearsals for the new revue, "Flying Colours," at the Hippodrome, and our talk turned to revues generally. In his opinion an audience's sense of humour is apt to be distracted by all the other appeals which a revue makes to its eyes and ears. "But revues," he added, philosophically, "are here, and they have apparently come to stay, and so we comedians must make the best of them."

By the way, we wonder how many readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE know how "Little Tich" came by the stage-name which is now world-famous. We all know him to be little in stature—but why Tich? Well, when he made his first appearance the Tichborne trial was still fresh in public recollection, and everybody who was stout was apt to be called a "Tich." And so the boy entertainer, who was stout for his size and age, was described as "Little Tich." In private life he is Harry Relph, as one was reminded by the framed diploma on the wall of his appointment a few years ago as an officer of the French Academy, the only English comedian to whom the honour has been awarded.

HELEN MAR.

"In a roving life," said Miss Helen Mar, whose "stories" have been told to thousands of audiences during the past few years, "which has taken me over a good portion of the world, I suppose I must have been very fortunate, for I have found that 'saving grace'—a sense of humour—in all countries. But you ask me particularly as to the United Kingdom. To be honest, I must say that I think there is very little difference, east or west, north or south. I find that a good story will always bring a laugh or a chuckle. It is one of the things which make the whole world kin.

"Of course, there are degrees in laughter as there are degrees in most things, but there is little to choose between a typical East-end audience and an ultra-fashionable West-end one when it comes to quickness in seeing a joke. If I may say so without being libellous, I think a Cheltenham audience is about the dullest I have ever appeared before. Of course, they may be 'too proud to laugh,' but at any rate I have always found an audience there most depressing. Schoolboy audiences I adore—they may not be, and in fact are not, particularly quick—but, bless the lads, they are so polite.

"That, by the way, is not what two old ladies were the other day. One of my stories, to give it point, required the use of the word 'damn,' and I overheard one of the ladies—they were in the front stalls—exclaim to the other, 'Disgusting!' 'Yes, dear,' replied her companion, 'but I believe she's an American!'"

MORRIS HARVEY.

We had our chat with Mr. Morris Harvey in his dressing-room at the Ambassadors Theatre during a short interval in his performance in the revue "Pell Mell," while he was shaving. For Mr. Harvey was living perhaps the most strenuous life of any London actor, training

as a gunner-cadet in the Royal Horse Artillery during the day and playing at night, his "day" lasting from 5.30 a.m. to 11.15 p.m.

"In my experience," said Mr. Harvey, "there's nothing so good as the Cockney's sense of humour. In this matter Scotland is libelled and Ireland overrated. I remember a visit to Dublin when I was one of the 'Follies.' They could not understand in Dublin why they should be charged theatre prices for 'a mere pierrot entertainment,' not knowing that the 'Follies' were unlike any other pierrots. For a long time they wouldn't give us a hearing, until at last Pelissier, who, as you know, was a weighty man in more senses than one, tackled each leader of the uproar individually. For instance, a man in the gallery shouted out, 'Go back to London.' Immediately Pelissier replied, 'Yes, we shall after next Saturday, but we shall not take you with us, as you have been such a naughty boy.' Eventually the opposition was silenced, and next day the Dublin papers admitted that the Cockney had beaten the Irishman at his own game.

"Of course, there's a difference between humour and the sense of humour, but in my belief a London audience excels in both."

ACROSTICS.

The Last of the Third Series.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 17.

Brothers whose habits you may recognize
The streets of London bring before your eyes.

1. The Jew is first, but only when he leads.
2. A midday meal is all the solver needs.

3. Queen of the ocean,—in hexameters.
4. Reckon the title his, but never hers.

5. Take one of four, the thief is known to fame.
6. Lady and coin—what is his Christian name?

7. It's been misspelt, and then the hue is red.
8. Take off, take off the tail, take off the head.

9. Here men in song are seen by us, not heard.
10. Three letters vanish from three-lettered word.

11. Scattered they were; the name that one possessed
Is in another answer manifest.

PAX.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 18.

For some reverse that does not please
A whipping-boy is lacking?
Let's load our burden on to these,
And promptly send them packing.

1. No Phœnix, though a bird that folk
May often see go up in smoke.

2. A famous personage you seek
Who, after crown refused, "spoke Greek."

3. This, which a deadly threat conveyed,
A drama was and can be made.

4. First half is often second half;
The whole's been used to make us laugh.

5. All such as deal in gold or stones
No doubt pile offerings on his bones.

QUÆSTOR.

Answers to Acrostics 17 *and* 18 *should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor,* THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C., and must arrive not later than by the first post on November 7th.*

Two answers may be sent to every light.

With their answers to these two acrostics, solvers are requested to send also their names and addresses.

ANSWER TO No. 15.

1.	M	ediu	M
2.	O	rland	O
3.	U	nusua	L
4.	N	ud	E
5.	T	icklis	H
6.	A	don a	I
7.	I	nitia	L
8.	N	arwha	L

NOTES.—Light 2. Shakespeare. "As You Like It." 6. Lytton, "Zanoni."

ANSWER TO No. 16.

1.	N	oug	H
2.	A	mitta	I
3.	T	our	S
4.	U	is	T
5.	R	ati	O
6.	A	boyeu	R
7.	L	ign	Y

NOTES.—Light 1. Nought; enough. Enough is as good as a feast. 2. Jonah. 3 S. Martin. 5. Ration; ratio, reason. 6. Winner of the Derby in 1913; French, *aboyeur*, [illegible] 7. Ligny and Qua[illegible] were fought on [illegible]

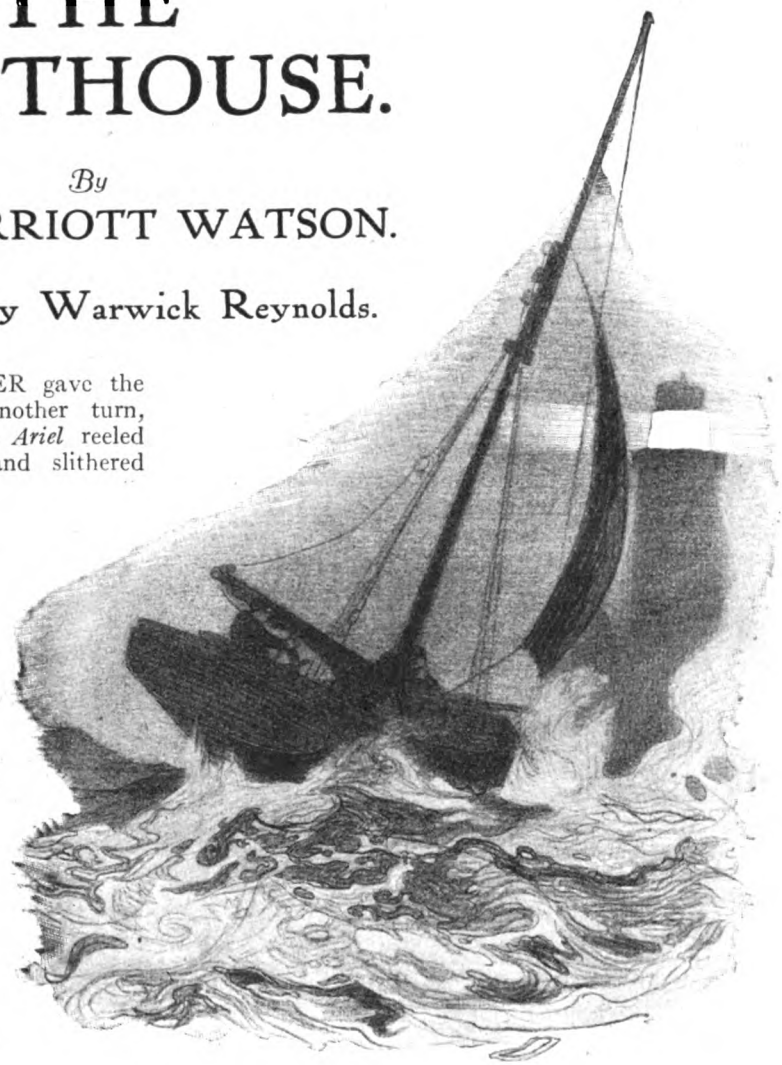
"Ripon" is accepted for the last light of No. 13, and "Isis" for the third light of No. 14.

THE LIGHTHOUSE.

By

H. B. MARRIOTT WATSON.

Illustrated by Warwick Reynolds.



LANCASTER gave the wheel another turn, and the *Ariel* reeled awash and slithered along the trough with the spume-topped hills on each side. He shouted to Dubbin, but his voice never reached the man, who was just visible in the smother of sea and broken light kneeling with an arm outreached to the jibsail. He shouted again, and Dubbin crawled back to him from the waist, over the half-deck, and seated himself by his master. "Did you see that destroyer?" screamed Lancaster; "and there was that cruiser far[illegible]own. What a devil of weather for mar[illegible] I wonder where the mischief at hi[illegible]

Dubbin shouted, but his voice did not carry against the terrific wind. He was a man of thirty-five, with the cool address of a sailor. He leaned nearer and shouted again, this time into his master's ear, "Off Holland somewhere, sir."

"No—more likely rounded the point and towards the Goodwins. Anyway, it's out of my hands. Compass gone, light gone, and the boat keeping up her head with a sprit-sail. I'm frozen. Can you get at the rum, Dubbin?"

Dubbin dived down into the darker depths of the well and fished up a bottle, which he uncorked, and then he poured some of the contents into a pannikin. Lancaster tossed off the neat spirit, and gave the wheel another turn. "Running before the enemy," he shouted. "What hard luck if we finish up at the bottom within call of home!"

Dubbin looked disconsolately at the dim masses of water, and said nothing.

"Can you make out anything?" cried Lancaster.

"I thought I caught sight of a light, sir, when we were on top just now."

"So did I. Ship or lightship?"

"Perhaps the Goodwin Sands, sir, as you say; but I think it's the Dutch coast," suggested Dubbin.

Lancaster shook his head. "This is a sou'-westerly gale, and I know how we've been pointing since we entered the Channel. Lord, she has footed it!"

"Light starboard, sir!" called the man.

Lancaster uttered an exclamation, and pulled at his wheel. Where the mischief was he? The light, now visible to him clearly in the grey-black of the sky, blinked at him in a friendly way. The sea seemed quieter now, though the long rollers tossed the *Ariel* like a cockleshell. If it was a lightship—— Suddenly a huge wave seized the boat and soared aloft. It swept on like a charger that had bolted, and in a little they were descending, and were dashed into a seething pool, grounding heavily, while the roar of the mountainous wave died slowly in their ears.

"Where the devil are we?" cried Lancaster. "Goodwin Sands. That's the lightship!"

Was it? Dubbin said nothing.

Coming up the Channel before the gale struck them, Lancaster had entertained many pleasant thoughts. It was eight months since he had been in his club and had been boasting in an amiable way about his new craft. He was a fair sailorman, and an enthusiast, and talk had flowed in the billiard-room upon rigs and races and gala days in the Solent.

"Did you see that fellow, an American, went round the world in an open boat in eighteen months?" asked Beaumont.

"Easy job, with good furniture," said Lancaster, lightly.

But Beaumont had been impressed. They disputed.

"Hang it, man. Give the fellow his credit," said Beaumont. "What could you do in a similar case?"

Lancaster smiled in a superior way. "My boat is not an open boat, but she is only a twenty-five footer. I'll do it in half the time."

But here others broke in. Lancaster had a soft job with a half-decked boat. He must be handicapped.

He was indifferent to a handicap. They ordered more whisky and soda, and continued the discussion. He was feeling in great fettle, pleased with his boat and himself.

"Hang it—back your claim, Beaumont," he said. "I'll give you a bet. I will do it in half the time."

"Under conditions, drawn up and agreed to, I agree," said Beaumont.

"Let these fellows—Joynes is a yachtsman—do the conditions," said Lancaster, loftily.

So the conditions were drawn up as follows:—

Lancaster engaged to sail the *Ariel* from London Pool to London Pool, round the world, in nine calendar months. He was to be allowed one man to navigate with himself. He was allowed supplies to a certain amount, was not to put in to any harbour save for a renewal of supplies and water; and his personal testimony as to the performance was to be accepted.

"Very well," said Beaumont, "an even thousand."

"Agreed," said Lancaster. "I start Tuesday. Mark the date, boys. You can see me off, if you will—Millwall."

"It's a dreary place," said Beaumont, lazily. "I'll take your word for it. But I believe I ought to have tied you tighter."

"Tie me as you like," flashed Lancaster.

"No, it's done with. I'm through."

"Very well," said Lancaster, gleaming. "I'll tie myself. I undertake—get this down, you fellows—I undertake to put into no civilized harbour on the way. If I want stores, I'll shoot 'em or fish 'em. I'll live on a desert sea, and make no communication with civilization on land or water. Got that?"

"My poor Quixote!" murmured Beaumont.

That was the scene which had busied Lancaster's mind at intervals as they thrashed through the Bay of Biscay. He had kept the terms of his wager. Dubbin and he had set sail from the Port of London on a hot summer day, and had gone down the Channel, negotiated the Bay of Biscay, rounded the Cape, and sternly ignored all temptation to put into civilized harbours. They had spoken with no one for eight months, and had only interviewed unintelligible savages. Here and there it had been necessary to call for water and sundry fresh provisions such as the barbarian coasts of Africa and Asia could offer them. They had touched Borneo, New Guinea, and wild, unprofitable parts of Australia; had looked in on the South Island of New Zealand, and then started on the long voyage across the South Pacific to beat round the Horn.

Looking back on his adventurous but somewhat monotonous itinerary, Lancaster heaved a sigh of relief. Well, he was just under his time, and here he was—but where was he? "The Dutch coast," suggested Dubbin. Anyway, he should be within call of London, and his bet won.

"Pouf!" He stretched himself as he stood on the sand, with the wild welter of water thundering in his ears. Dubbin was busy securing the *Ariel* from the outreaching arms of the tumultuous sea. It was now pitch black save for the light that blinked on the distant darkness, and towards that he began to pick his way.

It was a lighthouse on rough high ground, and he waded to it through the sand of the dunes. When he reached it he explored for the door, which was open. The wind thrashed from the farther side of the building, and this entrance was in comparative peace. A light shone on a table within, and moving about was a woman's figure. Here there was some hope of succour, some surety of welcome. He saw her arrange a well-filled dish on the table, and at that he waited no longer but approached, knocked loudly on the door, and stood on the threshold.

The girl looked up quickly, and of a sudden started as if in amazement.

"Madam," said Lancaster. "I'm sorry to call so late, but I've run ashore down yonder."

"Ashore!" she cried, in English, which was foreignly accented. "You are English—you are——"

"Yes, mademoiselle," he said, pleasantly; "and this is—I begin to think it must be off Borkum somewhere."

She eyed him wildly, hostilely. "You know where this is," she said, "and you have the shamelessness to come to me."

"Why, Fräulein," he said, apologetically, "I'm sorry, I know it's an untimely hour. But, you see, shipwrecked sailors can't be choosers. I only wished——"

"Shipwrecked!" she repeated, and stared at him in silence as one considering swiftly.

She was a well-built girl of two or three and twenty, fair and flaxen, and distinctly pretty.

"You have been driven ashore, then," she said. "You are not a spy?"

"Good Lord, no," said Lancaster, laughing. "I was trying to get to London in my yacht; that's all."

"Our ships did not chase you?" she asked.

He looked puzzled. "No," he said, "only the wind," and laughed again.

"It is dangerous your being here," said the girl, gravely. "You know that."

"Oh," said he, lightly. "No one can be responsible for the hazards of the wind in weather like to-night's. I know this is supposed to be a very private part, where they don't want strangers." His eyes had wandered from her to the spread table on which was an inviting ham, but he said nothing. When he looked up again she was regarding him steadfastly.

"Where have you come from?" she asked, brusquely.

"Out of the vasty deep," he said, smiling. "I've been trying a venture with a small boat. I've put a girdle round the world. You know Shakespeare? All Germans seem to."

She nodded thoughtfully. "Where did you call?" she inquired, gravely.

"Why, nowhere save on empty coasts. It was part of the wager. I've nearly done it, but I think I've lost. This storm has cost me a thousand pounds."

She saw his gaze return to the table. "You are hungry," she said. "Sit down. I am—I am all alone just now. My uncle, who keeps the lighthouse, is away, and my cousin was—he was called off suddenly."

Lancaster thanked her cordially, and sat down cheerfully to eat. She watched him, and said nothing as he chattered lightly on, glad to have talk once more with someone in the centre of civilization.

"You must be lonely here," he said.

"I have not been here long," she replied; "only since—since—some months."

"Isn't this the twelfth?" he asked next. "I'm not sure I've got the dates right."

"Yes."

"By Jove! I believe I've got a chance after all, to do it," he said, brightening. "If only the wind would give over!" He glanced through the half-open door into the night. Suddenly he remembered Dubbin, and felt quite mean.

"You want to leave the island at once?" she asked.

"Yes; I ought——" He hesitated, wondering about Dubbin. "Lord, what fun it will be in London learning all the news. I shall feel like Rip Van Winkle."

She leaned towards him, fixing her large brown eyes on him.

"You have heard nothing, then?"

"Not a word—nothing since I left last summer."

He was busy on the ham when she spoke next in a rather tense voice which trembled. "I believe you. I didn't at first. I thought you were a—— You mustn't be here. It is death to you." She read the amazement in his face. "England is at war with Germany."

He started up with the knife and fork in his hands and stared. "You are speaking the truth?" he asked, slowly.

"God knows," she said, with a groan. The knife and fork clattered from his loosening fingers upon the plate.

"Tell me more," he said. "What has happened?"

Swiftly, tremulously, she rehearsed the events of the preceding months, and he listened in silence.

"My God!" he said, and stared at her harder.

"We had no quarrel with the English," she cried, suddenly emotional. "Why did they fight us? And my mother—my mother—was English!"

"I know nothing," he answered, "nothing. But this I am sure—no one in my country had any ill-will to any nation. My God, what does it all mean? It's inconceivable—it's a nightmare."

"It's only because I know you speak the truth and are no spy," she said, "that I tell you this. You must go before it is too late. My uncle keeps this light burning. It has to do with the war. It is orders from the Admiralty. You must go. My uncle will be back—my cousin."

He looked at the door ajar; the wind was whistling and groaning about the tower, but the sound was less in volume and stridency than it had been; the wind was dropping. He looked back at her.

"I am deeply in your debt, Fräulein," he said. "You are right. I must go."

He moved towards the door, when of a sudden she seized his arm almost in a spring.

"There is a light—my uncle!" she said, intensely.

"No, it is——" He thought it must be Dubbin, but wondered at the light.

"There is no way out. You must go up here." She pointed to the steps leading to the upper storeys of the light-tower. He cast a swift glance towards the half-opened door, through which a swinging light was visible, hesitated just a moment, and then rapidly ascended the stairs. The stage to which he mounted was in darkness, but a light hung on the wall farther up. He stood leaning over and listening. He heard steps enter the chamber below, and upon that a man's voice, guttural and caressing. He turned things over quickly in his mind. If Dubbin should arrive all would be up. But this girl would not betray him; he felt sure of that.

The voices reached him now, the girl's pleasantly musical, the man's rather harsher but cooing, as it seemed. This was surely not the uncle, but——

"Truda, you have never answered my question. I asked you more than three weeks now, and you are silent."

"You had my answer then," she replied.

"That was no answer—it was merely nonsense. You could not mean it, and you did not mean it. I want the answer of a woman and not of a petulant child. We Germans are proud of our women."

"And so keep them slaves," came the girl's voice, rather sharply.

"What maggot has got hold of you, Truda? You talk such nonsense. It is treachery to our great nation. You have been reading the books of the French, or of the accursed English. It is all your English mother. I said no good would come of this learning of languages. Deutschland über alles!"

"Franz, you have had my answer, and there is nothing more to say."

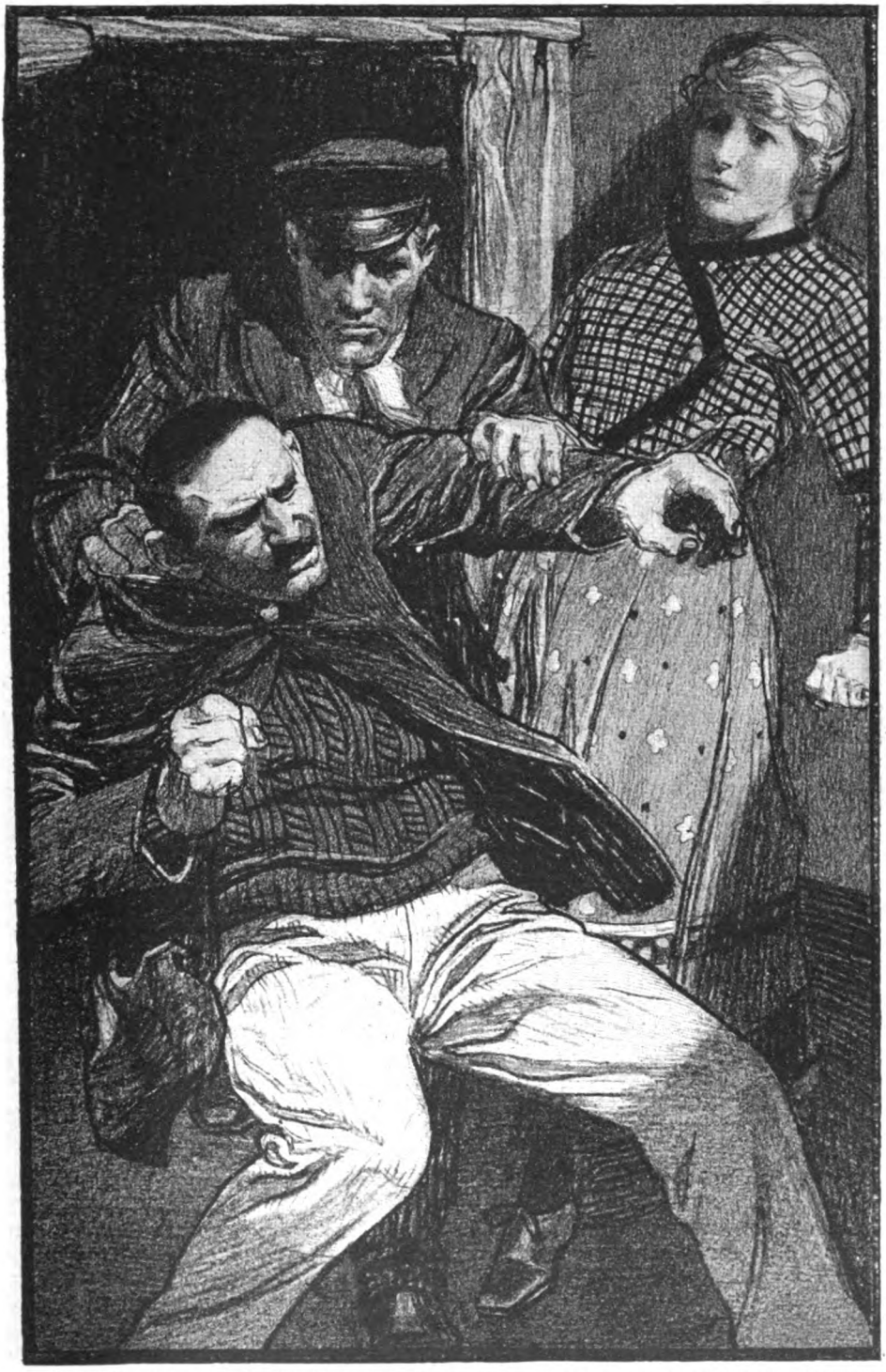
Lancaster, listening, heard the sound of heavy footsteps on the stone floor, and upon that an exclamation of anger from the girl. He crept down the stairs cautiously and tried to see round the curve of the twisting stairway, but failed.

"You shall not. Go back. Your father shall know."

The girl's voice was angry, and contained also a note of fear.

"My father, as you know, favours my suit," came a voice now frankly coarse.

Lancaster turned back. Here was a dispute in progress which would probably not aid him in his predicament. The girl, he thought, might have temporarily got rid of the man if she had kept on amiable terms. He turned his attention to the room above, and then a thought struck him. The amazement of the news had numbed him, but now it ran through him like a call; his imagination flamed up at all that was involved in this war. He ascended the stairs, from storey to storey, until he had reached the tower in which the great light burned. In a moment he had found the crank and switched it off. Whatever service it was to render the German Navy by its continuance it could render no longer. Carefully he crept from flat to flat in the darkness till he reached the chamber



"LANCASTER SHOT DOWN INTO THE ROOM, AND ALMOST IN ONE MOVEMENT HAD THE BRUTE BY THE NECK."

above the living-room. Here a disturbing sound struck on his ears, the sound of a struggle. By repeating his former manœuvre he was able to see that the quarrel between the man and the girl had merged into physical violence. Truda had her back against the wall and fought like a cat, while the monstrous lout was striving to reach through her defences to her.

Lancaster shot down into the room, and almost in one movement had the brute by the neck. Within five seconds he had him under his knee on the floor. The German stared in bewilderment and then scowled as he breathed hard.

"Give me some rope," said Lancaster to the girl, and, gazing fascinated, she took a hank from a corner. Lancaster bound up his prisoner tightly, and trussed him as only a sailor can secure. Then he stepped back. The situation was difficult. He was now free to go, but what about the girl? His eyes met hers in the dim-lighted room, and the shadows had deepened.

"I regret, Fräulein," he began, in harsh and bad German, "that it was necessary for me to use this man so, but it was necessary to my safety and escape. I advise you to be quiet, or it will be necessary for me to deal with you also."

She said nothing, but watched him, wondering, while he opened a door that led into a small lean-to built against the lighthouse, and dragged the prisoner in. Then he shut him in, and beckoned to the girl.

"Fräulein," he whispered in English, "I must now go. I thank you for all you have done for me. There will be no trouble for you, since this fellow cannot know of our meeting, and will suppose me from my words to have been surreptitiously in hiding. I must go."

For answer she drew him swiftly back from the entrance to the chamber to which he had advanced in his desire for private speech.

"There are footsteps. Quick!" she said, tensely.

He listened, and again Dubbin occurred to him.

"You must go up again," she said. "It is my uncle. Be quick, or you are a dead man."

Once more Lancaster took to the stairway, and once more mounted to the cell above; once more he peered down into the faint luminosity below. It was a tall, thick-built man who had entered, and his first words betrayed excitement and even agitation.

"The light! The light!" he cried. "What have you done to it? Where is Franz? The light, mein Gott!"

"What is it?" asked the girl, in confusion and wonder.

"It is not burning. It is out. Mein Gott! and the fleet will lose their way, and run ashore in this heavy sea. Mein Gott, mein Gott!" He moved heavily towards the stairs and began to climb them.

Lancaster drew back, holding his breath, and awaited the inevitable collision. Behind him a tiny flame burned in an oil lamp: he put it out. The room through which the man must pass on his way to the light-room was in the nature of a bedroom, but scantily furnished. The man blundered in, and groped his way, uttered a curse at the darkness, and suddenly struck a match. The flare found him facing Lancaster, and for an instant they stared at each other—German and Englishman. Then with an oath, ripped out in the quick alarm of his recognition of the intruder's nationality, the lighthouse-keeper flung himself on the enemy.

The impact of the heavier man took Lancaster all but unawares, and under it he reeled, fastening at the same time upon his assailant with arms like wires. He was lean but full of vitality, and the overbearing force of the blow only served to send the German staggering into the seemingly empty resistance of his foe. He came near sprawling, but recovered, and with the tentacles about him, struggled and struck. He approached the wall in the darkness and endeavoured to drive the clinging Englishman against it. It was as the fight of a bear against a lithe cat. Again and again he attempted this manœuvre, and was always fouled by an apparently trivial twist on the part of the foe. He began to use his hands upon the body before him, squeezing and cracking at the ribs. Round his leg was twisted another in an old Cornish trick, but the stout German stood his ground and gave not, renewing his effort to drive the wind and the life out of his adversary.

He began to fumble with one hand, and it was for a knife he was reaching. At this instant Lancaster gave a sudden turn to the twisted leg, and the German staggered and tried to recover—staggered again, and then fell irrecoverably. He fell through the open door of the room and out upon the steep stairway, dragging with him Lancaster. Headlong they descended it in a rush to the floor below.

"FOR AN INSTANT THEY STARED AT EACH OTHER—GERMAN AND ENGLISHMAN."

It was after a minute or two that Lancaster managed to rise to his feet, disentangling himself from the load of his enemy. He was dazed and confused, but the German lay in a heap, unconscious. Slowly Lancaster looked round the room, and encountered the fevered, wondering eyes of the girl.

"You put out the light," she said, accusingly.

He nodded. "That brought my downfall." He laughed. "Well, we must pull things together. Your uncle——"

He was fast recovering now, and he stooped to the German. "Knocked him out—that's all," he said; "and with your permission, Fräulein, I must make him secure also."

He forthwith fastened up the helpless body as he had already secured the son, and then turned to the woman, who was watching him as if fascinated.

"Now," said he, "I owe you my life, and I have put you in this situation. I have only one thing I can do. You must come with me."

For a moment the fascinated look in her large eyes intensified; she swayed a little towards him, but did not speak.

"You have been a party to the escape of an English spy. That is how it will appear," he went on. "I don't know your code of penalties in Germany, but I can conceive them pretty thorough. You must come, Fraülein." Again she swayed and put out a hand upon the table as if to support herself. "And you shall come with all the honour that a man can offer to one who has risked her life to save him."

Suddenly she broke silence in a jerky way, and her bosom heaved.

"No, no! It is impossible. You must go now ere he comes round, and they are released. I—I am safe."

"Fräulein, you are not," he pleaded, earnestly. "Let me take you to England, where you will be in safety, and honoured. I cannot—I dare not leave you here."

She pointed to the door. "Leave me. I shall be safe. See, it is quite easy. Neither my uncle nor my cousin knows anything, or can suspect. You are a wandering spy. You must—you must tie me up also, with them—those ropes. Now—you must do it now—or all is lost."

He demurred, but she brought the ropes and put them in his hands, and reluctantly he began to lace them about her, talking low the while, and pleading to a silent audience—about her smooth neck, across her deep bosom, round the waist, and round about the body. She spoke nothing, but shivered under his touch, shivered and shut her eyes.

He rose from where he had laid her gently in the corner on some matting.

"God forgive me," he said, softly. "There is still time. Come."

Her eyes were closed, and she opened them not. Swiftly he bent. "Good-bye, Truda," he whispered, and kissed her. He went out into the night.

In the grey darkness by the sea he encountered the philosophic Dubbin, who had secured the boat, and was making a meal.

"Light went out, sir," he said, cheerfully. "Couldn't make out where you'd got to. Sea's going down."

Within ten minutes the *Ariel* was pointing off the dunes, and Lancaster was chancing his luck in a deadly minefield. Of this he knew nothing. Nor did he know that, missing the expected light, several of the returning German destroyers ran out of their course, and met their doom among their own mines. He was heading for England in the darkness, in glorious ignorance, and with an undertone of pity. Fairly early in the day they encountered off the Essex coast a patrol boat, and explanations followed. A few hours later, Lancaster was in London, and by night-fall, immaculately dressed and groomed, was in his club. He asked the hall-porter for Mr. Beaumont.

"I've lost by twelve hours owing to that unlucky slip," he thought. "Well, he shall have his thousand."

"Mr. Beaumont, sir!" said the elderly porter, looking with surprise at the bronzed man. "Didn't you know, sir? He was killed in action, sir, in January."

"Mr. Joynes?" said Lancaster, staring stupidly.

"Mr. Joynes lost an arm, sir."

"Torrance!" The name came almost mechanically. What was this that had happened to the world? There was war, but——

"Mr. Torrance is missing, sir."

Great heavens! Lancaster turned away, and then turned back. "Where is there a recruiting office, Callingham?" he asked, and went out.

The world was topsy-turvy. He had tumbled into it from out of the beyond. He reflected as he made his way to the recruiting office.

"Beaumont won that thousand, but, poor chap, he'll never handle it. Exit Beaumont — enter Lancaster. And, by Heaven, who deserves that money more than the woman who made this new recruit —to be paid after the war?" he murmured, softly.

The BRITISH CAMPAIGN IN FRANCE.

THE FACTS AT LAST!

The Inside Story of the War.

By

A. CONAN DOYLE.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST BATTLE OF YPRES.

(Continued.)

(From the Action of Gheluvelt to the Winter Lull.)

Pressure on the Cavalry—The London Scottish—The Ypres Defence—Withdrawal of the Seventh Division—Second Corps Come North—The Attack of the Prussian Guard—Repulse of the Guard—Subsidence of the First Battle of Ypres—General View of the Battle—Death of Lord Roberts.

PRESSURE ON THE CAVALRY.

WHILST this severe fighting had been going on to the north of the British position, the centre, where the dismounted cavalry was holding the line of trenches, was so terribly pressed that it is an extraordinary thing that they were able to hold their own. The Second Corps, which at that time had just been withdrawn for a rest from the La Bassée lines, were the only available reinforcements. When news was flashed south as to the serious state of affairs, two regiments, the 2nd Yorkshire Light Infantry and the 2nd Scottish Borderers from the Thirteenth Infantry Brigade, were sent up in motor-buses by road to the relief. Strange indeed was the sight of these vehicles flying along the Flemish roads, plastered outside with the homely names of London suburbs and crammed with the grimy, much-enduring infantry. The lines at Messines were in trouble, and so also were those at Wytschaete farther to the north. To this latter place went two battalions of Shaw's Ninth Brigade, the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers and the 1st Lincolns. Hard work awaited the infantry at Messines and at Wytschaete, for in both places Allenby's troopers were nearly rushed off their feet.

It has already been shown that on October 30th a severe assault was made upon the Third Cavalry Division, when the Seventh Brigade (Kavanagh's) was forced out of Zandvoorde by the Fifteenth German Army Corps. Upon this same date a most strenuous attack, made in great force and supported by a terrific shell-fire, was directed along the whole line of the cavalry from Wytschaete to Messines. No British troops have been exposed to a more severe ordeal than these brave troopers, for they were enormously outnumbered at every point, and their line was so thin that it was absolutely impossible for them to prevent it from being pierced by the masses of infantry,

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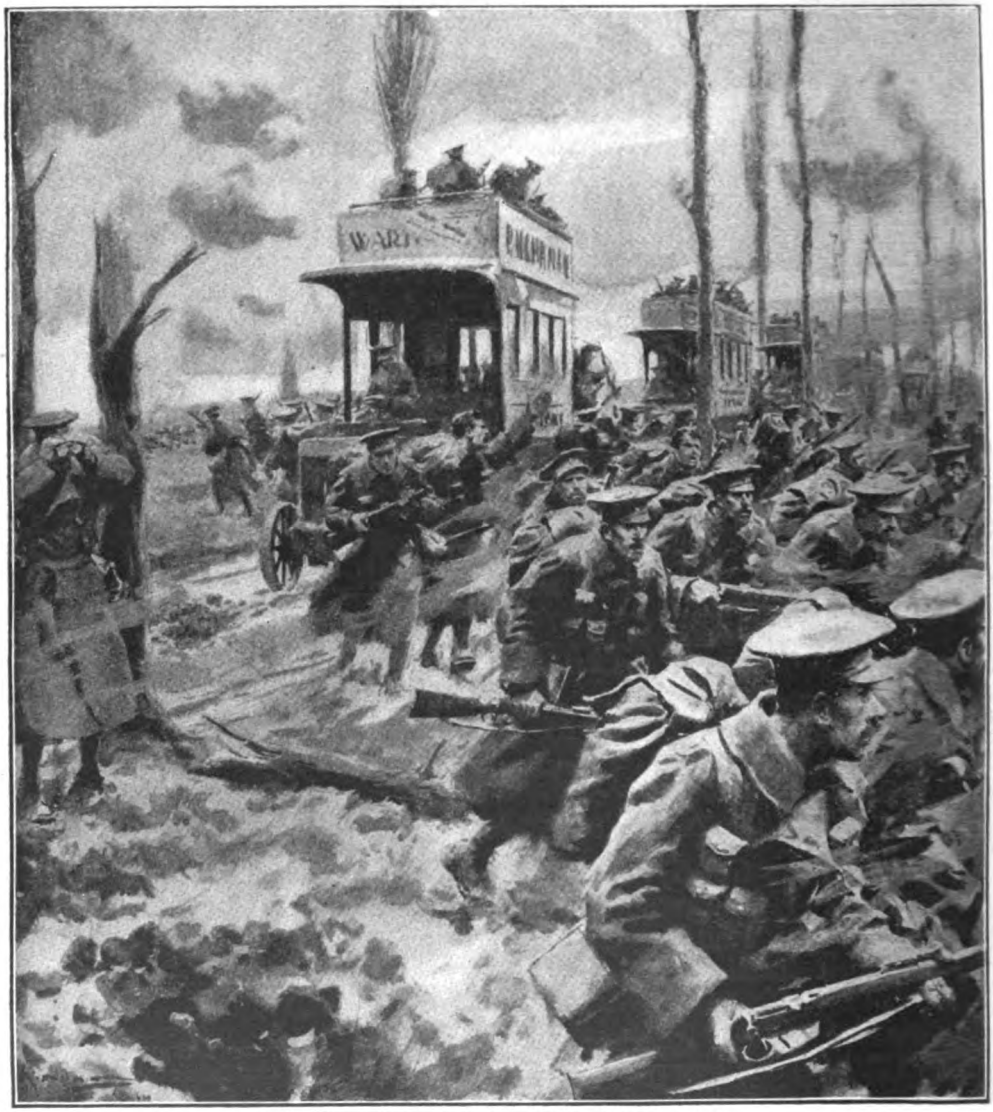


BY MOTOR-BUS TO THE FIRING-LINE.

"STRANGE INDEED WAS THE SIGHT OF THESE VEHICLES FLYING ALONG THE FLEMISH ROADS, PLASTERED OUTSIDE WITH THE HOMELY NAMES OF LONDON SUBURBS AND CRAMMED WITH INFANTRY."

from the 24th Corps and 2nd Bavarian Corps, which were hurled against them. From the extreme left of the Second Cavalry Division near Wytschaete, to the right of the First Cavalry Division south of Messines, the same reports came in to the anxious General, of trenches overwhelmed or enfiladed, and of little isolated groups of men struggling most desperately to keep a footing against an ever-surging grey tide which was beating up against them and flowing through every gap. In the north Gough's men were nearly overwhelmed, the 5th Irish Lancers were shelled out of a farmhouse position, and the 16th Lancers, shelled from in front and decimated by rifles and machine-guns from the flank, were driven back for half a mile until three French battalions helped the line to re-form. The pressure, however, was still extreme, the Germans fighting with admirable energy and coming forward in never-ending numbers. An Indian regiment of the Seventh (Ferozepore) Brigade, the 129th Baluchis, had been helping the cavalry in this region since October 23rd, but their ranks were now much decimated, and they were fought almost to a standstill. Two more British regiments from the Second Corps, the 1st Lincolns and the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers

of the Ninth Brigade, together with their Brigadier, Shaw, who was a reinforcement in himself, were, as already stated, hurried off from the south in motor-buses to strengthen Gough's line. Advancing into what was to them an entirely strange position, these two veteran regiments sustained very heavy losses which they bore with extreme fortitude. They were surprised by the Germans on the road between Kemmel and Wytschaete on the night of October 31st, the same night upon which the London Scottish to the south of them were so heavily engaged. Colonel Smith succeeded in extricating the Lincolns from what was a most perilous position, but only after a loss of sixteen officers and four hundred men. The Fusiliers were almost as hard hit. For forty-eight hours the battle swung backwards and forwards in front of Wytschaete, but in the end the village itself was lost, though the defensive lines to the west of it were firmly established. By November the second strong French reinforcements had appeared, and it was clear that this desperate attempt to break through the very centre of the British position had definitely failed.

The struggle at Messines, some five miles to the south, had been even more severe and sanguinary than at Wytschaete. In the early morning of the 31st the Bays and the 5th Dragoon Guards upon the left of the Messines position, after a heavy shell-fall, were driven out of their trenches by a sudden furious advance of the German infantry. The front of the village of Messines was held by Wild's 57th Rifles, who were driven in by the same attack, every officer of the regiment being killed or wounded. A reserve company of Wild's Rifles and a squadron of the 5th Dragoon Guards endeavoured to restore the fight, but could not hold the torrent. The 9th Lancers, also in front of the village, and to the right of the Indians, held on for a long time, repulsing the infantry attacks, until they were driven back by the deadly shell-fire. At one time they were enfiladed on both sides and heard the Germans roaring their war songs in the dark all round them; but they were able, owing to the coolness of Colonel Campbell and the discipline of his veteran troopers, to fall back and to re-form upon the western side of the village. Lance-Corporal Seaton distinguished himself by covering the retreat of his whole squadron, remaining single-handed in his trench until his Maxim was destroyed, after he had poured a thousand shots into the close ranks of his assailants.

The situation was so serious after dawn upon the 31st that General De Lisle had to call for help from Wilson's Fourth Infantry Division, holding the line upon his right. The Inniskilling Fusiliers were extended so as to relieve his right flank. The struggle within Messines was still going forward with fighting from house to house, but the Germans, who were coming on with overpowering numbers and great valour, were gradually winning their way forward. The Oxfordshire Hussars, fresh from the base, were thrown into the combat. A second line of defence had been arranged a mile or so to the west, near Wulverghem, but if Messines must go the victors should at least pay the price down to the last drop of blood which could be wrung from them. Reinforcements were within sight, both French and British, but they were scanty in quantity though superb in quality. It was a most critical position, and one cannot but marvel at the load of responsibility which Sir John French had to bear upon this day, for from the left of Haig's First Corps in the north, down to Neuve Chapelle in the south, a stretch of twenty-five miles, there was hardly a point which was not strained to the verge of cracking. Cool and alert, he controlled the situation from his central post and threw in such reinforcements as he could find, though, indeed, they could only be got by taking them from places where they were wanted and hurrying them to places where they were needed even more urgently. He was strengthened always by the knowledge that General Joffre behind him was doing all that a loyal colleague could to find fresh columns of his brave little infantrymen to buttress up the hard-pressed line.

For the moment, however, none of these were available, and Messines was still partly in British, partly in German hands. Briggs's First Brigade—Bays, 5th Dragoon Guards, and 11th Hussars—with the Oxfords, held on to the western edge of the town. To their left, linking up with Gough's men in the Wytschaete sector, was the 4th Dragoon Guards. Late in the afternoon the 2nd Scots Borderers and the 2nd Yorkshire Light Infantry (the joint detachment under Major Coke) arrived from the south, and were at once advanced upon Messines to stiffen the defence. Under heavy fire they established themselves in the village. Evening fell with desperate street fighting and the relative position unchanged. Twice the Bavarians stormed into the central square, and twice they fell back after littering it with their bodies. It seemed hopeless to hold the village against the ever-growing pressure of the Germans, and yet the loss of the village entailed the loss of the ridge, which would leave a commanding position in the hands of the enemy. Village and ridge were mutually dependent, for if either were lost the other could not be held.

THE LONDON SCOTTISH.

As it proved, it was the ridge and not the village which could no longer sustain the pressure. On the night of October 31st Mullen's Second Cavalry Brigade—9th Lancers, 4th Dragoon Guards and 11th Hussars—took over the defence from Briggs. Of these, the 4th Dragoon Guards were to the left of the village upon the ridge. The London Scottish had been brought up, and they were placed upon the left of the 4th Dragoon Guards, forming a link of the defence which connected up the Second Cavalry Division with the First. The right-hand regiment of the latter, the 6th

THE LONDON SCOTTISH RE-FORMING UNDER A TERRIBLE

"THE LONDON SCOTTISH WERE THE FIRST TERRITORIAL INFANTRY TO COME INTO ACTION, AND THEIR COMRADES WHO HAVE FROM

Carbineers, of Bingham's Fourth Brigade, were upon the left of the London Scottish. These two regiments held the centre of the ridge. The London Scottish had already suffered considerable losses. Hurried up from the lines of communication to St. Eloi, they were pushed forward at once into action, and were exposed for hours to all the nerve-racking horrors of a heavy shell-fire endured in most insufficient trenches. A more severe ordeal was in store for them, however, during the grim night which lay before them. The admirable behaviour of Colonel Malcolm's men excited the more attention as they were the first Territorial infantry to come into action, and they set a standard which has been grandly sustained by the half-million of their comrades who have from first to last come into the line.

On the early morning of November 1st there had been a strong attempt within the village to improve the British position, and some ground was actually gained by the cavalrymen, the Yorkshire Light Infantry, and the Scots Borderers. What occurred, however, on the ridge to the north made all further effort a useless waste of life. The Bavarian infantry had come with an irresistible rush against the thin British line. The order to hold their ground at all costs was given, and the London Scots answered it in a way which gained the highest praise from the many soldiers who saw it. It is not claimed that they did better than their Regular comrades. That would be impossible. The most that can be said is that they proved themselves worthy to fight in line with them. After being exposed for several hours to heavy shell-fire, it was no light task for any troops to be called upon to resist a direct assault. From nine in the evening of October 31st to two in the morning, under the red glare of burning houses, Colonel Malcolm's Scottish and Colonel Annesley's Carbineers held back the Bavarian advance, an advance which would have meant the piercing of the British line. At two o'clock the Bavarians in greatly predominant force were all round the Scots, and even the reserve companies found work for their bayonets, preventing the enemy from encircling their companions. The losses were very heavy—four hundred men and nine officers, including their gallant doctor, McNab, who was villainously stabbed as he bandaged a patient. In

FIRE BEFORE THEY MADE THEIR LAST BRILLIANT CHARGE.

THEY SET A STANDARD WHICH HAS BEEN GRANDLY SUSTAINED BY THE HALF-MILLION OF FIRST TO LAST COME INTO THE LINE."

spite of the great pressure, the ground was held all night, and it was not till dawn, when the regiment found that it was outflanked on both sides and nearly surrounded, that, under cover of the fire of E Battery, R.H.A., it fell back. The Carbineers and the Scots were close together, and the Germans, with their usual quick ingenuity, approached the former with a cry of "We are the London Scots." A disaster might have occurred in the darkness but for the quickness and bravery of a young officer, Lieutenant Hope Hawkins, who rushed forward, discovered the identity of the Germans, and fell, riddled with bullets, even while he gave warning to his comrades.

The Germans had won the ridge, but the British line was still intact and growing stronger every hour. The village was held by the Scots Borderers and Yorkshiremen until nearly ten o'clock, when they were ordered to fall back and help to man the new line. The shock had been a rude one, but the danger-hour was past here as in the north.

The fateful November 1st had come and gone. The villages of Messines and Wytschaete were, it is true, in German hands, but French reinforcements of the Sixteenth Corps were streaming up from the south, the line, though torn and broken, still held firm, and the road to Calais was for ever blocked. There was still pressure, and on November 2nd the 11th Hussars were badly cut up by shell-fire, but the line was impregnable. Sir John French summed up in a few terse words the true meaning of the operations just described, when he said afterwards, in addressing the 9th Lancers, "Particularly I would refer to the period, October 31st, when for forty-eight hours the Cavalry Corps held at bay two German army corps. During this period you were supported by only three or four battalions, shattered and worn by previous fighting, and in so doing you rendered inestimable service." There have been few episodes in the war which have been at the same time so splendid and so absolutely vital. The First Cavalry Division lost fifty per cent. of its numbers between October 30th and November 2nd, and the Second Division was hardly in better case, but never did men give their lives to better purpose. Their heroism saved the Army.

Meanwhile the current of operations was evidently running strongly towards the northern end of the British line, where help was badly

needed, as Haig's men had been fought almost to exhaustion. There was no British reinforcement available save only the weary Second Corps, the remains of which from this date began to be drafted northwards. It was already known that the German Emperor had appeared in person in that region, and that a great concentration of his troops was taking place. At the same time, the French were making splendid exertions in order to stiffen their own line and help us in those parts, like Messines, Wytschaete, and Ploegsteert, where the attack was most formidable. It was a great gathering towards the north, and clearly some hard blows were to be struck. Northwards then went General Morland, of the Fifth Division, taking with him four more weak battalions. The whole line had moved upwards towards the danger spot, and these troops now found themselves east of Bailleul, close to the village of Neuve Eglise. For the moment General Smith-Dorrien was without an army, for half his men were now supporting General Willcocks in the south and half General Allenby or General Haig in the north. The British leaders all along the line were, as usual, desperately endeavouring to make one man do the work of three, but they were buoyed up by the knowledge that good Father Joffre, like some beneficent earthly Providence, was watching over them from the distance, and that fresh trainfuls of his brave little men were ever steaming into the danger zone. Day by day the line was thickening and the task of the Kaiser becoming more difficult. It was hoped that the crisis was past. If our troops were exhausted, so also, it was thought, were those of the enemy. We could feel elated by the knowledge that we had held our ground, while they could hardly fail to be depressed by the reflection that they had made little progress in spite of so many heroic efforts, and that Calais was as far from them as ever.

THE YPRES DEFENCE.

The narrative must now return to the defenders of the Ypres approaches, who were left in a state of extreme exhaustion by the critical action of October 31st. On November 1st the First Corps was not in a condition to do more than to hold its line. This line was now near to Veldhoek, to the west of Gheluvelt village, and to that extent the Germans had profited by their desperate fighting, but this was a detail of small consequence so long as an unbroken British Army covered the town that was still the objective of the enemy. The Ninth French Corps to the north of the British had lost heavily, but to the south of the canal lay the Sixteenth French Corps, which was in comparatively good condition. This corps now made an advance to take some of the pressure off the British line, while Moussy's regiments to the north of the canal were to co-operate with Bulfin's men upon their left. Upon the left of Bulfin's Second Brigade were two battalions of the Fourth Brigade of Guards.

One of these battalions had a terrible experience upon this morning. For some reason the trenches of the Irish Guards were exposed to an enfilading fire from the high explosives of the Germans, which wrought even more than their customary damage. For hours the Guardsmen lay under a terrific fire, to which they could make no reply and from which they could obtain no protection. When at last, in the afternoon, they were compelled to fall back, their losses had been great, including their colonel, Lord Ardee, seven other officers, and over three hundred men. It is the hard fate of the side which is weaker in artillery to endure such buffetings with no possibility of return.

The French attack of the Sixteenth Corps had been brought to a speedy standstill, and a severe counter-attack, preceded by a heavy shell-fire, had fallen upon General Moussy's men and upon Bulfin's Second British Brigade. Help was urgently needed, so the remains of the Seventh Brigade from the Third Cavalry Division were hurried forward. The Germans were now surging up against the whole right and right-centre of the line. It seems to have been their system to attack upon alternate days on the right and on the centre, for it will be remembered that it was on October 29th that they gained the Gheluvelt cross-roads and on October 31st Gheluvelt village, both in the centre, while on October 30th they captured the Zandvoorde ridge upon the British right, and now, on November 1st, were pressing hard upon the right once more.

That morning the Army sustained a loss in the person of General Bulfin, who was wounded in the head by shrapnel. Fortunately his recovery was not a lengthy one, and he was able to return in January as commander of the Twenty-eighth Division. Upon his fall, Lord Cavan, of the Fourth Brigade, took over the command upon the hard-pressed right wing. At half-past one the hundred survivors of the 2nd Gordons, on the right of the Seventh Division, and the 2nd Oxford and Bucks, were desperately hard-pressed by a strong German infantry advance, and so were the remains of the Sussex and Northamptons. The only available help lay in the 23rd Field Company of Royal Engineers. Our sappers proved, as they have so often done before, that their hearts are as sound as their heads. They pushed off the enemy, but incurred heavy losses. The situation was still critical when at the summons of Lord Cavan the 2nd Grenadiers advanced and cleared the Germans from the woods in the front and flank, while the 10th Hussars supported their advance. A gap had been left in the trenches from which the Irish Guards had been pushed, but this was now filled up by cavalry, who connected up with the French on their right and with the Guards upon their left. The general effect of the whole day's fighting was to drive the British line farther westward, but to contract it, so that it required a smaller force. Two battalions—the Gordons and the Sussex—could be taken out and brought into reserve. The centre of the line had a day's rest and dug itself into its new positions, but the units were greatly mixed and confused. If the

reader finds some difficulty in following them he is only reflecting the state of mind of the brigade and divisional commanders, who had to handle that complex situation. It will take a work upon the scale of Kinglake's account of the Crimea to do justice to the details of such a battle.

November 2nd brought no surcease from the constant fighting, though the disturbance of these days, severe as it was, may be looked upon as a mere ground swell after the terrific storm of the last days of October. On the morning of the 2nd the Ninth French Corps upon the British left, under General Vidal, sent eight battalions forward to the south and east in the direction of Gheluvelt. Part of this village was actually occupied by them. The Germans meanwhile, with their usual courage and energy, were driving a fresh attack down that Menin road which had so often been reddened by their blood. It was the day for a centre attack on their stereotyped system of alternate pushes, and it came duly to hand. An initial success awaited them as, getting round a trench occupied by the Rifles, they succeeded in cutting off a number of them. The Third Brigade was hurried up by General Landon to the point of danger, and a French Zouave regiment helped to restore the situation. A spirited bayonet charge, in which the Gloucesters led, was beaten back by the enemy's fire. After a day of confused and desultory fighting the situation in the evening was very much as it had been in the morning. Both that night and the next day there was a series of local and sporadic attacks, first on the front of the Second Division and then of the Seventh, all of which were driven back. The Germans began to show their despair of ever gaining possession of Ypres by elevating their guns and dropping shells upon the old Cloth Hall of that historic city, a senseless act of spiteful vandalism which exactly corresponds with their action when the Allied army held them in front of Rheims.

November 4th was a day of menaces rather than of attacks. On this day, units which had become greatly mixed during the incessant and confused fighting of the last fortnight were rearranged and counted. The losses were terrible. The actual strength of the infantry of the First Division upon that date was: First Brigade, twenty-two officers, twelve hundred and six men; Second Brigade, forty-three officers, thirteen hundred and fifteen men; Third Brigade, twenty-seven officers, nine hundred and seventy men; which make the losses of the whole division about seventy-five per cent. Those of the Second Division were very little lighter. And now for the twenty-five per cent. remainder of this gallant corps there was not a moment of breathing space or rest, but yet another fortnight of unremitting work, during which their thin ranks were destined to hold the German army, and even the Emperor's own Guard, from passing the few short miles which separated them from their objective. Great was the "will to conquer" of the Kaiser's troops, but greater still the iron resolve not to be conquered which hardened the war-worn lines of the soldiers of the King.

WITHDRAWAL OF THE SEVENTH DIVISION.

November 5th was a day of incessant shell-fire, from which the Seventh Division, the Fourth and the Sixth Brigades were the chief sufferers. On this day the Seventh Division, which had now been reduced from twelve thousand infantry to two thousand three hundred and thirty-three, was withdrawn from the line. In their place were substituted those reinforcements from the south which have already been mentioned. These consisted of eleven battalions of the Second Corps under General McCracken; this corps, however, was greatly worn, and the eleven battalions only represented three thousand five hundred rifles. The Seventh Division was withdrawn to Bailleul in the south, but Lawford's Twenty-second Brigade was retained in corps reserve, and was destined to have one more trial before it could be spared for rest. The day was memorable also for a vigorous advance of the Gloucester Regiment, which was pushed with such hardihood that they sustained losses of nearly half their numbers before admitting that they could not gain their objective. A description has been given here of the events of the north of the line and of the cavalry positions, but it is not to be supposed that peace reigned on the south of this point. On the contrary, during the whole period under discussion while the great fight raged at Ypres there had been constant shelling and occasional advances against the Third Corps in the Armentières section, and also against the Indians and the Second Corps down to the La Bassée Canal.

The most serious of these occurred upon November 9th. Upon this date the Germans, who had knocked so loudly at Messines and at Wytschaete without finding that any opening through our lines was open to them, thought that they might find better luck at Ploegsteert, which is a village on the same line as the other two. Wytschaete is to the north, Messines in the middle, and Ploegsteert in the south, each on the main road from Ypres to Armentières, with about four miles interval between each. The German attack was a very strong one, but the hundredfold drama was played once more. On the 3rd Worcesters fell the brunt, and no more solid fighters have been found in the Army than those Midland men from the very heart of England. A temporary set-back was retrieved and the line restored. Major Milward, of the Worcesters, a very gallant officer, was grievously wounded in this affair. The counter-attack which restored the situation was carried out mainly by the 1st East Lancashires, who lost Major Lambert and a number of men in the venture.

Upon November 6th, about 2 p.m., a strong German advance drove in those French troops who were on the right of Lord Cavan's Brigade —Fourth—which occupied the extreme right of Haig's position. The point was between Klein

Zillebeke and the canal, where a German lodgment would have been most serious. The retirement of the French exposed the right flank of the 1st Irish Guards. This flank was strongly attacked, and for the second time in a week this brave regiment endured very heavy losses. No. 2 company was driven back to the support trenches, and No. 1 company, being isolated, was destroyed. The situation was splendidly saved by Kavanagh's Seventh Cavalry Brigade, who galloped furiously down the road to the place where they were so badly needed. This hard-worked *corps d'élite*, consisting of the 1st and 2nd Life Guards supported by the Blues, now flung themselves into the gap, a grimy line of weather-stained infantry with nothing left save their giant physique and their spurs to recall the men who are the pride of our London streets. The retiring French rallied at the sight of the sons of Anak. An instant later the Germans were into them, and there was a terrific *mêlée* of British, French, and Prussians, which swung and swayed over the marshland and across the road. Men drove their bayonets through each other or fired point-blank into each other's bodies in a most desperate fight, the Germans slowly but surely recoiling, until at last they broke. It was this prompt and vigorous stroke by Kavanagh's Brigade which saved a delicate situation. Of the three cavalry regiments engaged, two lost their colonels—Wilson of the Blues and Dawnay of the 2nd Life Guards. Sixteen officers fell in half an hour. The losses in rank and file were also heavy, but the results were great and indeed vital. The whole performance was an extraordinarily fine one.

Early on the morning of November 7th Lawford's Twenty-second Brigade, which was now reduced to eleven hundred men, with seven officers, was called upon to retake a line of trenches which the enemy had wrested from a neighbouring unit. Unbroken in nerve or spirit by their own terrific losses, they rushed forward, led by Lawford himself, a cudgel in his hand, carried the trench, captured three machine-guns, held the trench till evening, and then retired for a time from the line. Captains Vallentin and Alleyne, who led the two regiments into which the skeleton brigade had been divided, both fell in this feat of arms. After this action there remained standing the brigadier, three officers, and seven hundred men. The losses of the brigade work out at ninety-seven per cent. of the officers and eighty per cent. of the men, figures which can seldom have been matched in the warfare of any age, and yet were little in excess of the other brigades, as is shown by the fact that the whole division on November 7th numbered forty-four officers and two thousand three hundred and thirty-six men. It is true that many British regiments found themselves in this campaign with not one single officer or man left who had started from England, but these were usually the effects of months of campaigning. In the case of the Seventh Division, all these deadly losses had been sustained in less than three weeks. Britain's soldiers have indeed been faithful to the death. Their record is the last word in endurance and military virtue.

The division was now finally withdrawn from the fighting-line. It has already been stated that there were reasons which made its units exceptionally fine ones. In General Capper they possessed a leader of enormous energy and fire, whilst his three brigadiers—Watts, Lawford, and Ruggles-Brise—could not be surpassed by any in the Army. Yet with every advantage of officers and men there will always be wonder as well as admiration for what they accomplished. For three days, before the First Corps had come thoroughly into line, they held up the whole German advance, leaving the impression upon the enemy that they were faced by two army corps. Then for twelve more days they held the ground in the very storm-centre of the attack upon Ypres. When at last the survivors staggered from the line, they had made a name which will never die.

SECOND CORPS COME NORTH.

The bulk of Smith-Dorrien's Corps had now been brought north, so that from this date (November 7th) onwards the story of the First and Second Corps is intimately connected. When we last saw this corps it will be remembered that it had been withdrawn from the front, having lost some twelve thousand men in three weeks of La Bassée operations, and that the Indian Corps had taken over their line of trenches. Such fighting men could not, however, be spared in the midst of such a fight. The hospital was the only rest that any British soldier could be afforded. Whilst they had still strength to stand they must line up to the German flood or be content to see it thunder past them to the coast. They were brought north, save only Bowes' Eighth Brigade and Maude's Fourteenth, which remained with the Indians in the south. Although the Seventh Division had been drawn out of the line, its attendant cavalry division still remained to give its very efficient help to General Haig. The British position, though by no means secure, was getting stronger day by day, for General d'Urbal of the Eighth French Army to the north, and General Maud'huy of the Tenth French Army to the south, had both been strongly reinforced, and with their usual good comradeship did all they could to strengthen the flanks and shorten the front of the British line.

The men of the Second Corps who had come north from the La Bassée district were not left long unmolested in their new sphere of operations. On the afternoon of November 7th there was a hot German attack upon that portion of the line which had just been vacated by the Seventh Division. The trenches were now held by the Fifth Division (Morland's).

The enemy may have hoped for some advantage from a change which they may well have observed, but they found that, though the units might be different, the same old

breed still barred their path. On this occasion, after the early rush had spent itself upon the 1st Lincolns, it was the 2nd West Ridings who led the counter-charge. The line, however, was never fully re-established. A number of smaller attacks broke upon the front of the Second Division on the same day, leaving a few score of prisoners behind them as they ebbed. On the same day, November 7th, the enemy got into the trenches of the 2nd Highland Light Infantry and remained in them, for all of them were bayoneted or taken. Upon this day the London Scottish were brought up into the Ypres line—a sign, if one were needed, that after the action described they were accepted as the peers of their comrades of the Regular Army, for no empty compliments are passed when the breaking of a unit may mean the enfilading of a line.

November 8th was a quiet day, but it was well known from every report of spy, scout, and aeroplane to be the lull before the storm. One German brigade came down the Menin road, and went up it again leaving a hundred dead on or beside the causeway. This attack inflicted some loss upon the 1st North Lancashires and on the 1st Scots Guards. The 1st Bedfords captured a trench that night. The 9th and the 10th were uneventful, and the tired troops rested on their arms, though never free for an hour from the endless pelting of shells. To the north and east the Eagles were known to be gathering. There were the Emperor, the Emperor's Guard, and a great fresh battle of the Germans ready for one grand final dash for Calais, with every rifle in the firing-line and every cannon to support it. Grave messages came from headquarters, warning words were passed to anxious brigadiers, who took counsel with their colonels as to fire-fields and supports. Batteries were redistributed, depleted limbers refilled, and observation posts pushed to the front, while the untiring sappers gave the last touches to traverse and to trench. All was ready for the fray. So close were the lines that at many points the conversations of the enemy could be heard.

THE ATTACK OF THE PRUSSIAN GUARD.

The Germans had already concentrated a large number of troops against this part of the British line, and they were now secretly reinforced by a division of the Prussian Guard. Documents found afterwards upon the dead show that the Guard had had special orders from the Emperor to break the line at all costs. The brigades which attacked were made up of the 1st and 2nd Foot Guards, the Kaiser Franz Grenadiers No. 2, the Königin Augusta Grenadiers No. 4, and the battalion of Garde Jäger—thirteen thousand men in all. It was to be victory or death with the *corps d'élite* of the German army, but it was no less victory or death with the men who opposed them. After an artillery preparation of appalling intensity for three hours along the line of both the First and Second Divisions, the infantry advance began about nine-thirty on the morning of November 11th amid a storm of wind and rain. They are gregarious fighters, the Germans, finding comfort and strength in the rush of serried ranks. Even now the advance was made in a close formation, but it was carried out with magnificent dash, amazing valour, and a pedantic precision which caused, for example, the leading officers to hold their swords at the carry. The Prussian Guardsmen seemed to have lost nothing, and also to have learned nothing, since their famous predecessors lay dead in their ranks before St. Privat, forty-four years before. The attack was directed against the front of the two divisions of the First British Army Corps, but especially on the First Brigade, so that Guardsman faced Guardsman, as at Fontenoy. There were none of the chivalrous greetings of 1745, however, and a stern hatred hardened the hearts of either side. The German Guard charged on the north of the Menin road, while a second advance was made upon the south, which withered away before the British fire. Nothing could stop the Guards, however. With trenches blazing and crackling upon their flank, for the advance was somewhat diagonal, they poured over the British position and penetrated it at three different points, where the heavy shells had overwhelmed the trenches and buried the occupants, who, in some cases, were bayoneted as they struggled out from under the earth. It was a terrific moment. The yells of the stormers and the shrill whistles of their officers rose above the crash of the musketry-fire and roar of the guns. The British fought in their customary earnest silence, save for the short, sharp directions of their leaders. "They did not seem angry—only business-like," said a hostile observer. The troops to the immediate north of the Menin road, who had been shelled out of their trenches by the bombardment, were forced back and brushed aside into the woods to the north, while the Germans poured through the gap. The 4th Royal Fusiliers of the Ninth Brigade, upon the right of the point where the enemy had penetrated, were enfiladed and lost their gallant colonel, MacMahon, a soldier who had done great service from the day of Mons, and had just been appointed to a brigade. The regiment, which has worked as hard and endured as great losses as any in the campaign, was reduced to two officers and a hundred men.

The German Guard poured on into the woods which lay in the immediate rear of the British position, but their formation was broken and the individualism of the Briton began to tell. Next to MacMahon's regiment lay the 1st Scots Fusiliers, sister battalion to that which had been destroyed upon October 31st. With fierce joy they poured volleys into the flank of the Guard as the grey figures rushed past them into the woods. Four hundred dead Germans were afterwards picked out from the underwood at this point. The Scots Fusiliers were also hard hit by the German fire.

At this period the Germans who had come

THE DESPERATE ATTEMPT OF THE PRUSSIAN GUARD

"IT WAS A FINE ATTACK, BRAVELY DELIVERED BY FRESH TROOPS AGAINST WEARY MEN, BUT IT THROUGH

through the line had skirted the south of a large wood of half-grown trees, called the Polygon Wood, and had advanced into the farther one, named Nonnebusch. At this point they were close to the British artillery, which they threatened to overwhelm. The 41st Brigade R.F.A., and especially the 16th Field Battery, were in the immediate line of their advance, and the gunners looking up saw the grey uniforms advancing amid the trees. Colonel Lushington, who commanded the artillery brigade, hurriedly formed up a firing line under his adjutant, composed partly of his own spare gunners and partly of a number of Engineers, reinforced by cooks, officers' servants, and other odd hands who are to be found in the rear of the army, but seldom expect to find themselves in the van of the fight. It was a somewhat grotesque array, but it filled the gap and brought the advance to a halt, though the leading Germans were picked up afterwards within seventy yards of the guns.

Whilst the position was critical at this point of the front, it was no less so upon the extreme right, where the French detachment, who still formed a link between the canal on the south and the British right flank, were shelled out of their trenches and driven back. Lord Cavan's Fourth Brigade, their nearest neighbours, were too hard pressed to be able to help them. To

TO BREAK THE BRITISH LINE ROUND YPRES.

SHOWED THE GERMAN LEADERS ONCE FOR ALL THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO FORCE A PASSAGE THE LINES."

the north of the Menin road a number of British units were intact, and these held up the German flood in that region. There are two considerable woods—the Polygon to the north and the Nonnebusch to the south-west of the Polygon—the edges of which have defined the British position, while their depths have harboured their artillery. Now the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment held firm to the south of the Polygon Wood, while north of them were the 2nd Highland Light Infantry, with a field company of Engineers. Farther to the south-west were the 1st Connaught Rangers, while on the other side of the Nonnebusch road was the Seventh Cavalry Brigade. In the afternoon of this day the enemy, skirting the south of the Polygon Wood, had actually entered the Nonnebusch Wood, in which it faced the artillery as already described. In the Polygon Wood, when they penetrated the trenches of the First Brigade, they had the King's Liverpool Regiment on their right, which refused to move, so that for a long time the Prussian Guard and the King's lay side by side with a traverse between them. "Our right is supported by the Prussian Guard," said the humorous adjutant of the famous Lancashire regiment. While the main body of the Guard passed on, some remained all day in this trench.

REPULSE OF THE GUARD.

The German Guardsmen had been prevented from submerging the Forty-first Brigade of Artillery, and also the Thirty-sixth Heavy Battery, by the resistance of an improvised firing-line. But a more substantial defence was at hand. The 2nd Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry, which had been in divisional reserve near Ypres, had been brought forward and found itself at Westhoek, near the threatened guns. This regiment is the old 52nd, of the Peninsular Light Division, a famous corps which threw itself upon the flank of Napoleon's Guard at Waterloo and broke it in the crisis of the battle. Once again within a century an Imperial Guard was to recoil before its disciplined rush. Under Colonel Davies the regiment swept through the wood from north-west to south-east, driving the Germans, who had already been badly shaken by the artillery fire, in a headlong rout. Many threw down their arms. The loss to the Oxfords was surprisingly small, well under fifty in all. As they emerged from the wood they were joined by some of the 1st Northamptons from the Second Brigade upon the right, while on the left there was a rush of Connaughts and Highland Light Infantry from their own (Haking's) brigade and of Engineers of the 25th Field Company, who showed extraordinary initiative and gallantry, pushing on rapidly, and losing all their officers save one and a number of their men without flinching for an instant. A party of the Gloucesters, too, charged with the Northamptons upon the right, for by this time units were badly mixed up, as will always happen in woodland fighting. "It was all a confused nightmare," said one who tried to control it. The line of infantry dashed forward, a company of the Oxfords under Captain H. M. Dillon in the lead, and the khaki wave broke over a line of trenches which the Germans had taken, submerging all the occupants. There was another line in front, but as the victorious infantry pushed forward to this it was struck in the flank by a fire from French batteries, which had been unable to believe that so much progress could have been made in so short a time.

It was now nearly dark, and the troops were in the last stage of exhaustion. Of the First Brigade, something less than four hundred with four officers could be collected. It was impossible to do more than hold the line as it then existed. Two brave attempts were made in the darkness to win back the original front trenches, but it could not be done, for there were no men to do it. Save for one small corner of the Polygon Wood, the Germans had been completely cleared out from the main position. At twelve and at four, during the night, the British made a forward movement to regain the advanced trenches, but in each case the advance could make no progress. At the very beginning of the second attempt General FitzClarence, commanding the First Brigade, was killed, and the movement fizzled out. Besides General FitzClarence, the Army sustained a severe loss in General Shaw of the Ninth Brigade, who was struck by a shell splinter, though happily the wound was not mortal. The German losses were exceedingly severe; seven hundred of their dead were picked up within a single section of the British line, but the main loss was probably sustained in the advance before they reached the trenches. Killed, wounded, and prisoners, their casualties cannot have been less than ten thousand men. It was a fine attack, bravely delivered by fresh troops against weary men, but it showed the German leaders once for all that it was impossible to force a passage through the lines. The Emperor's Guard, driven on by the Emperor's own personal impetus, had recoiled broken, even as the Guard of a greater Emperor had done a century before from the indomitable resistance of the British infantry. The constant fighting had reduced British brigades to the strength of battalions, battalions to companies, and companies to weak platoons, but the position was still held. They had, it is true, lost about five hundred yards of ground in the battle, but a shorter line was at once dug, organized, and manned. The barrier to Ypres was as strong as ever.

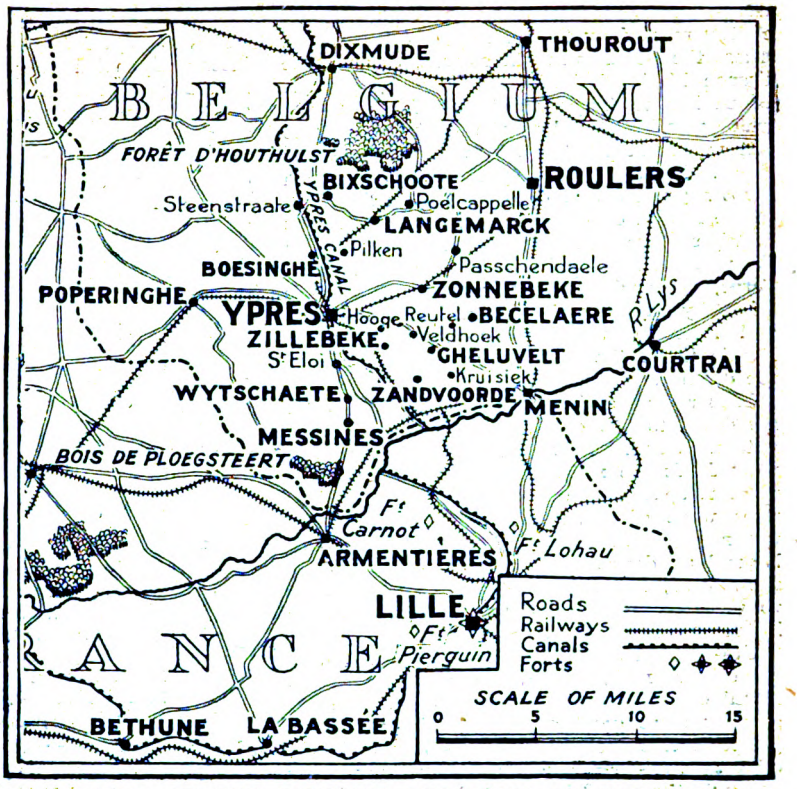
The strain upon the men, however, had been terrific. "Bearded, unwashed, sometimes plagued with vermin, the few who remained in the front line were a terrible crew," says the American Coleman. "They were like fierce, wild beasts," says another observer. They had given their all, almost to their humanity, to save Britain. May the day never come when Britain will refuse to save them.

Glancing for a moment down the line to the south, there had been continuous confused contention during this time, but no great attack such as distinguished the operations in the north. Upon November 7th two brisk assaults were made by the Germans in the Armentières area, one upon the Fourth Division of the Third Corps and the other upon the Seaforth Highlanders, who were brigaded with the Indians. In each case the first German rush carried some trenches, and in each the swift return of the British regained them. There were moderate losses upon both sides. On the same date the Thirteenth Infantry Brigade lost the services of Colonel Martyn of the 1st West Kents, who was seriously wounded the very day after he had been appointed to a brigade.

SUBSIDENCE OF THE FIRST BATTLE OF YPRES.

This attack upon November 11th represents the absolute high-water mark of the German efforts in this battle, and the ebb was a rapid one. Upon November 12th and the remainder of the week, half-hearted attempts were made upon the British front, which were repulsed without difficulty. To the north of the line, where the French had held their positions with much the same fluctuations which had been experienced by their Allies, the German assault was more violent and met with occasional

success, though it was finally repelled with very great loss. The 14th was to the French what the 11th had been to the British—the culmination of violence and the prelude of rest. The weather throughout this period was cold and tempestuous, which much increased the strain upon the weary troops. Along the whole line from Ypres to Bethune there were desultory shellings with an occasional dash by one side or the other, which usually ended in the capture of a trench and its recapture by the supports in the rear. It was in one of these sporadic German attacks in the Klein Zillebeke section that the 2nd King's Royal Rifles held their trench against heavy odds, and their machine-gun officer, Lieutenant Dimmer, thrice wounded and still fighting, won the coveted Cross by his valour. Each gallant advance and capture of the Germans was countered by an equally gallant counter-attack and recapture by the British. The long line sagged and swayed, but never bent or broke. The era of battles had passed, but for thirty miles the skirmishes were incessant. So mixed and incessant had been the fighting that it was a very difficult task during these days to tidy up the line and get each scattered group of men back to its own platoon, company, and battalion.



THE SCENE OF THE FIGHTING DESCRIBED IN THE PRESENT INSTALMENT.

On Tuesday, November 17th, the fighting suddenly assumed a more important character. The attack was again in the Ypres section and fell chiefly upon the battalions of the Second Corps, if so dignified a name as "battalion" can be given to bodies of men which consisted very often of less than a normal company, commanded, perhaps, by two junior officers. The Fourth Brigade of Guards was also heavily engaged this day, and so were the cavalry of the Third Division. The general locale of the action was the same as that which had been so often fought over before, the Second Corps being to the south of the Ypres-Menin road, with Lord Cavan's Guardsmen upon their right and the cavalry upon the right of the Guards. After a severe shelling there was a serious infantry advance about one o'clock which took some trenches, but was finally driven back and chased for a quarter of a mile. McCracken's Seventh Brigade bore a chief part in this fighting, and the 1st Wiltshires particularly distinguished themselves by a fine charge led by Captain Cary-Bernard. The 2nd Grenadiers did great work during the day.

An even heavier advance was made in the afternoon to the south of that which was broken in the morning. This involved an oblique advance across the British front, which was stopped and destroyed before it reached the trenches by the deadly fire of rifles and machine-guns. Over a thousand dead were left as a proof of the energy of the attack and the solidity of the resistance. Farther to the south a similar attack was beaten back by the cavalry after a preliminary shelling in which the 3rd Dragoon Guards suffered severely. This attack was repelled by the Third Cavalry Division, to which the Leicestershire and North Somerset Yeomanry were now attached. The latter did fine service in this action. Altogether, November 17th was a good day for the British arms and a most expensive one for the Germans.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE BATTLE.

We have now reached the end of the Battle of Ypres, which attained its maximum fury, so far as the British line was concerned, from

October 29th to November 11th. This great contest raged from the sand dunes of the north, where the Belgians fought so well, through the French Marine Brigade at Dixmude, and the Ninth French Corps, to General Haig's Corps, which was buttressed on the right towards the latter part of the battle by the Sixteenth French Corps. Farther south yet another French corps supported and eventually took the place of the British cavalry opposite the lost villages of Wytschaete and Messines. From there ran the unbroken lines of the imperturbable Third Corps, which ended to the south in the trenches originally held by the Second British Corps, and later by the Indians. Across the La Bassée Canal the French once again took up the defence.

It is not an action, therefore, which can be set down to the exclusive credit of any one nation. Our Allies fought gloriously, and if their deeds are not set down here, it is from want of space and of precise information, not from want of appreciation. But, turning to the merely British aspect of the fight—and beyond all doubt the heavier share fell upon the British, who bore the brunt from the start to the end—it may be said that the battle lasted a clear month, from October 12th, when Smith-Dorrien crossed the La Bassée Canal, to November 11th, when the German Guard reeled out of the Nonnebusch Wood. We are so near these great events that it is hard to get their true proportion, but it is abundantly clear that the battle, in its duration, the space covered, the numbers engaged, and the losses endured, was far the greatest ever fought up to that time by a British Army. At Waterloo the losses were under ten thousand. In this great fight they were little short of fifty thousand. The fact that the enemy did not recoil and that there was no sensational capture of prisoners and guns has obscured the completeness of the victory. In these days of nations in arms a beaten army is buttressed up or reabsorbed by the huge forces of which it is part. One judges victory or defeat by the question whether an army has or has not reached its objective. In this particular case, taking a broad view of the whole action, a German force of at least six hundred thousand men set forth to reach the coast, and was opposed by a force of less than half its numbers who barred its way. The Germans did not advance five miles in a month of fighting, and they lost not less than one hundred and fifty thousand men without any military advantage whatever, for the possession of such villages as Gheluvelt, Wytschaete, or Messines availed them not at all. If this is not a great victory, I do not know what military achievement would deserve the term.

DEATH OF LORD ROBERTS.

On November 15th Lord Roberts died whilst visiting the Army, having such an end as he would have chosen, within earshot of the guns and within the lines of those Indian soldiers whom he loved and had so often led. The last words of his greatest speech to his fellow-countrymen before the outbreak of that war which he had foreseen, and for which he had incessantly tried to prepare, was that they should quit themselves like men. He lived to see them do so, and though he was not spared to see the final outcome, his spirit must at least have been at rest as to the general trend of the campaign. The tradition of his fascinating character, with its knightly qualities of gentleness, bravery, and devotion to duty, will remain as a national possession.

About this time, though too late for the severe fighting, there arrived the Eighth Division, which would enable Sir Henry Rawlinsen to complete his Fourth Corps.

The Eighth Division was composed as follows :—

DIVISIONAL GENERAL—Gen. Davies.
23rd Infantry Brigade—Gen. Penny.
2nd Scots Rifles.
2nd Middlesex.
2nd West Yorkshires.
2nd Devons.
24th Infantry Brigade—Gen. Carler.
1st Worcesters.
2nd East Lancashires.
1st Notts and Derby.
2nd Northamptons.
25th Infantry Brigade—Gen. Lowry Cole.
2nd Lincolns.
2nd Berkshires.
1st Irish Rifles.
2nd Rifle Brigade.
Artillery—5th Brigade R.H.A., G.O.Z.
XLV. Brig. R.F.A.
XXXIII. do.
Heavy Batteries 118, 119.
Engineers 2, 5, F Cos.
8 Signal Co.
Divisional Cavalry.
Northampton Yeomanry.
8th Cyclists.

We have now arrived at what may be called the great winter lull, when the continuation of active operations was made impossible by the weather conditions, which were of the most atrocious description. It was the season which in a more classic age of warfare was spent in comfortable winter quarters. There was no such surcease of hardship for the contending lines, who were left in their trenches face to face, often not more than fifty yards apart, and each always keenly alert for any devilry upon the part of the other. The ashes of war were always redly smouldering, and sometimes, as will be seen, burst up into sudden furious flame. It was a period of rain-storms and of frost-bites, of trench mortars and of hand grenades, of weary, muddy, goat-skinned men shivering in narrow trenches, and of depleted brigades resting and recruiting in the rearward towns. Such was the position at the Front. But hundreds of miles to the westward the real future of the war was being fought out in the rifle factories of Birmingham, the great gun works of Woolwich, Coventry, Newcastle, and Sheffield, the cloth looms of Yorkshire, and the boot centres of Northampton. In these and many other places oversea the tools for victory were forged night

and day through one of the blackest and most strenuous winters that Britain has ever known. And always on green and waste and common, from Cromarty to Brighton, wherever soldiers could find billets or a village of log huts could be put together, the soldier citizens who were to take up the burden of the war, the men of the Territorials and the men of the new armies, endured every hardship and discomfort without a murmur, whilst they prepared themselves for that great and glorious task which the spring would bring. Even those who were too old or too young for service formed themselves into volunteer bands, who armed and clothed themselves at their own expense. This movement, which sprang first from a small Sussex village, was co-ordinated and controlled by a central body of which Lord Desborough was the head. In spite of discouragement, or at the best cold neutrality from Government, it increased and prospered until no fewer than a quarter of a million of men were mustered and ready entirely at their own expense and by private enterprise—one of the most remarkable phenomena of the war.

CHAPTER VIII.—THE WINTER LULL.

Singular Conditions—Reinforcements—The King's Visit.

SINGULAR CONDITIONS.

THE winter lull may be said to have extended from the great combats at Ypres of the middle of November, 1914, to the opening of the spring campaign in March, 1915. It was a period of alternate rest and discomfort for the troops, with an ever-present salt of danger. For days they found themselves billeted with some approach to comfort in the farmhouses and villages of Flanders, but such brief intervals of peace were broken by the routine of the trenches, when, in mud or water, with a clay cutting before their faces and another at their backs, they waited through the long hours, listening to the crack of the sniper's rifle, or the crash of the bursting shell, with an indifference which bordered upon thankfulness for anything that would break the drab monotony of their task. It was a scene of warfare which was new to military experience. The vast plain of battle lay in front of the observer as a flat and lonely wilderness, dotted with ruined houses from which no homely wreath of smoke rose into the wintry air. Here and there was an untidy litter of wire, here and there also a clump of bleak and tattered woodland, but nowhere was there any sign of man. And yet from the elevation of an aeroplane it might be seen that the population of a large city was lurking upon that motionless waste. Everywhere the airman would have distinguished the thin brown slits of the advance trenches, the broader ditches of the supports, and the long zigzags of the communications, and he would have detected that they were stuffed with men—grey men and khaki, in every weird garment that ingenuity could suggest for dryness and for warmth—all cowering within their shelters with the ever-present double design of screening themselves and of attacking their enemy. As the German pressure became less, and as more regiments of the Territorials began to arrive, taking some of the work from their comrades of the Regulars, it was possible to mitigate something of the discomforts of warfare, to ensure that no regiments should be left for too long a period in the trenches, and even to arrange for week-end visits to England for a certain number of officers and men. The streets of London got a glimpse of rugged, war-hardened faces, and of uniforms caked with the brown mud of Flanders, or supplemented by strange Robinson Crusoe goatskins from the trenches, which brought home to the least imaginative the nature and the nearness of the struggle.

REINFORCEMENTS.

Before noting those occasional spasms of activity—epileptic, sometimes, in their sudden intensity—which broke out from the German trenches, it may be well to take some note of the general development of those preparations which meant so much for the future. The Army was growing steadily in strength. Not only were the old regiments reinforced by fresh drafts, but two new divisions of Regulars were brought over before the end of January. These formed the Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth Divisions, under Generals Snow and Bulfin, two officers who had won a name in the first phase of the war. The two divisions together formed the Fifth Army Corps under General Plumer, the officer who had worked so hard for the relief of Mafeking in 1900. The divisions, which were composed of splendid troops who needed some hardening after tropical service, were constituted as follows, the list including Territorial regiments as well as the four original Regular units in each brigade :—

FIFTH ARMY CORPS.—General Plumer.

DIVISION XXVII.—Gen. Snow.

80th Infantry Brigade—Gen. Fortescue.
Princess Pat. Canadians.
4th Rifle Brigade.
3rd King's Royal Rifles.
4th King's Royal Rifles.
2nd Shrop. Light Infantry.

81st Infantry Brigade—Gen. Macfarlane.
9th Royal Scots (T.F.).
2nd Cameron Highlanders.
1st Argyll & Sutherland.
1st Royal Scots.
2nd Gloucesters.
9th Argyll & Sutherlands (T.F.).

82nd Infantry Brigade—Gen. Longley.
1st Leinsters.
2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers.
2nd Duke of Cornwall's L. Infantry.
1st Royal Irish.
1st Cambridge (T.F.).

Artillery—
XIX. Brigade R.F.A., etc.
Wessex R.E.
Army Troops—
6th Cheshires.

DIVISION XXVIII.—Gen. Bulfin.
83rd Infantry Brigade—Gen. Boyle.
2nd East Yorkshire.
1st King's Own York. L. Infantry.
1st York and Lancastere.
2nd Royal Lancasters.
3rd Monmouths (T.F.).
5th Royal Lancasters (T.F.).
84th Infantry Brigade—Gen. Winter.
2nd Northumberland Fusiliers.
1st Suffolks.
1st Welsh.
2nd Cheshires.
12th London Rangers (T.F.).
1st Monmouths (T.F.).
85th Infantry Brigade—Gen. Chapman.
2nd East Kent.
2nd East Surrey.
3rd Middlesex.
3rd Royal Fusiliers.
8th Middlesex (T.F.).
Artillery—Col. Kelly.
Surrey Yeomanry.

Besides this new Fifth Army Corps, there had been a constant dribble of other Territorial units to the Front, where they were incorporated with various regular brigades. The London Scottish, which had done so well, was honoured by admission to the First Brigade of Guards. The Artists' Rifles (28th London) had the unique distinction of being set aside as an officers' training corps, from which officers were actually drawn at the rate of a hundred a month. The Honourable Artillery Company, brigaded with the Eighth Brigade, was among the first to arrive. Conspicuous among the new-comers were the London Rifle Brigade, the 4th Suffolk, the Liverpool Scottish, the 5th and 6th Cheshire, the 1st Herts, the 2nd Monmouthshires, Queen Victoria Rifles, and Queen's Westminsters. These were among the earlier arrivals, though it seems invidious to mention names where the spirit of all was equally good. Among the yeomanry, many had already seen considerable service, notably the North and South Irish Horse, the Northumberland Hussars, the North Somersets, the Oxford and the Essex Yeomanry. Most of the troops named above shared the discomfort of the winter campaign before the great arrival of the new armies from England in the spring. There can be no better-earned bar upon a medal than that which stands for this great effort of endurance against Nature and man combined.

To take events in their order. Beyond numerous gallant affairs of outposts, there was no incident of importance until the evening of November 23rd, when the Germans, who had been stunned for a week or so, showed signs of returning animation. On this day some eight hundred yards of trench held by Indian troops in the neighbourhood of Armentières were made untenable by the German artillery, especially by the *minenwerfer*—small mortars which threw enormous bombs by an ingenious arrangement whereby the actual shell never entered the bore, but was on the end of a rod outside the muzzle. Some of these terrible missiles, which came through the air as slowly as a punted football, were two hundred pounds in weight, and shattering in their effects. There was an advance of the 112th Regiment of the Fourteenth German Corps, and the empty trenches were strongly held by them—so strongly that the first attempt to retake them was unsuccessful in the face of the rifle and machine-gun fire of the defenders. A second more powerful counter-attack was organized by General Anderson, of the Meerut Division, and this time the Germans were swept out of their position and the line re-established. The fighting lasted all night, and the Gurkhas, with their formidable knives, proved to be invaluable for such close work, while a party of Engineers with hand-bombs did great execution, a strange combination of the Asiatic with the most primitive of weapons and the scientific European with the most recent. It was a substantial victory as such affairs go, for the British were left with a hundred prisoners, including three officers, three machine-guns, and two mortars.

THE KING'S VISIT.

The first week of December was rendered memorable by a visit of the King to the Army. King George reviewed a great number of his devoted soldiers, who showed by their fervent enthusiasm that one need not be an autocratic War Lord in order to command the fierce loyalty of the legions. After this pleasant interlude there followed a succession of those smaller exploits which seem so slight in any chronicle, and yet collectively do so much to sustain the spirit of the Army. Now this dashing officer, now that, attempted some deed upon the German line, and never failed to find men to follow him to death. On November 24th it was Lieutenant Impey, with a handful of 2nd Norfolks; on November 25th, Lieutenants Ford and Morris, with a few Welsh Fusiliers and sappers; on November 26th, Sir Edward Hulse, with some Scots Guards; on the same day, Lieutenant Denham, with men of the 2nd Rifle Brigade; in each case trenches were temporarily won, the enemy was damaged, and a spirit of adventure encouraged in the trenches. Sometimes such a venture ended in the death of the leader, as in the case of Captain the Honourable H. L. Bruce, of the Royal Scots. Such men died as the old knights did who rode out betwixt the lines of marshalled armies, loved by their friends and admired by their foes.

[*Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's detailed account then includes a full story of the winter operations, which, interesting as they are, are of minor importance compared to what is to come. We pass on, therefore, with Sir Arthur's consent, to the Spring Campaign.*]

(*To be continued.*)

STORIES FROM THE FRENCH HUMORISTS.

II.

FOUR STORYETTES.

GRATITUDE.

By GEORGE AURIOL.

HEARING I required a secretary, one of my friends recommended a bald man with a wooden leg. The following is the conversation I held this morning—over the telephone—with the individual in question :—

"Hullo! Hullo! Is that Mr. Auriol? I am the person Mr. Barjau mentioned to you. I am the man with the wooden leg."

"Ah! Very good! How did you lose your leg?"

"I am coming to that in a moment."

"Very good. In what year did you leave Paris?"

"On November 7th, 1887, I left for Canada, where I reached the Great North-West Territory."

"You are bald, I hear. Did your hair fall off after an illness?"

"No. I was scalped by an Indian."

"Really! Did you stay long in the North-West?"

"No. I found it impossible to gain a living there."

"Where did you go next?"

"To New York."

"What did you do in New York?"

"I was by turns a druggist, a cook, a singer, a diver, a professor of languages, and a prison-warder."

"Did you not visit Borneo as well?"

"Yes; I was corn-cutter to the Rajah. But I had to fly the country to escape a jealous rival. I went off by night in a fishing-boat, and for seventy-five hours by my watch I was the sport of the waves. At the end of that time I was taken prisoner by the cannibals of the Island of Touba."

"Why didn't they eat you?"

"I was selected to play the part of roast joint at a grand banquet on July 22nd, but at the very moment I was being prepared for the spit the warriors of Raho made a raid on Touba and carried me off."

"Were they cannibals also?"

"Man-eaters of the worst description, but very nice fellows, all the same; very good-natured and well-bred. Gentlemen, and men of the world."

"Really!"

"Yes. 'It is our custom,' they told me, 'to eat all our prisoners; but since these dirty rascals of Touba condemned you, we intend to spare your life.'"

"Did you stay with them long?"

"I passed six delightful months there—the best of food, bed, and washing—a splendid time!"

"And why did you leave them?"

"I was homesick."

"And how did you get back to France?"

"On board the Dutch three-master *Ville de Rotterdam*, which carried on a trade in feathers with the natives of Raho. The

chief who had rescued me conducted me to the ship in his own canoe. He shed tears on parting with me. 'Do not weep,' I besought him. 'On my return to France I will send you six gold watches for your six sons.'"

"And have you sent them—these six watches?"

"No. From the moment I landed on the quay at Havre I never had a penny. I was obliged to black boots for a living. It was impossible to get together the money to buy watches——"

"Then——?"

"Then I called to mind the taste of these good savages for certain dainties. I had my leg cut off. I had it pickled, and I sent it to them, with a request that they would treat themselves to a nice little dinner—without any ceremony—in remembrance of me."

TESTIMONIALS.

By TRISTAN BERNARD.

1.—*To Dr. Saint-Cracy.*

I weighed nineteen stone, and had tried every possible means to reduce my weight, without result. I owe it to Providence that a friend gave me your address. I followed your treatment—your "Walking Exercises According to Reason," and after seven months I am three stone lighter. It gives me much pleasure to state this fact, for which I owe you a lasting debt of gratitude.

(Signed) A. LARTHUR,
Commercial Traveller.

2.—*To M. Henry Dutarse, M.D.*

I, the undersigned A. Larthur, commercial traveller, desire to express my gratitude to Dr. Dutarse. Having suffered from swollen feet and ankles in consequence of prolonged *walking exercises*, I had the good fortune to be recommended to him by one of his patients. Following the doctor's skilled advice, I steeped my feet and legs, for three hours every day, in wet clay. In six months the swelling had perceptibly subsided.

(Signed) A. LARTHUR.

3.—*To Dr. Trachet, of the Hospital for Diseases of the Throat.*

In consequence of sitting for hours with bare feet buried *in wet clay*, I contracted a grave affection of the larynx. By a happy inspiration I placed myself in your hands. Thanks to your celebrated Electric System, I am delighted to say that, after a year, my throat is considerably relieved.

A. LARTHUR.

4.—*To Dr. Oscar Block, Munich, Specialist in Nervous Diseases.*

For several months I was a great sufferer from nervous troubles, hysterical fits,

hallucinations, insomnia, etc., as a result of the *use of electricity*. Providentially I made use of your Bromide Treatment. At the beginning of the present year I began to feel an improvement. I feel that I owe you my lifelong gratitude.

A. LARTHUR.

5.—*To Dr. Henri de Beaupilore, Paris.*

My life had, for a year past, become one long martyrdom. My stomach, *weakened by bromides*, made the whole world appear a place of gloom. Thanks to your system of Starch Diet, my digestion is now somewhat less painful. I owe you a debt of gratitude which I can never repay. A. LARTHUR.

6.—*To M. Henri Beaumartin, M.D.*

Sir,—You ask me for a testimonial for your report to the Academy of Medicine. I send it herewith, but I fear it will not be of much service.

It is true that I came to you last March. As I was suffering from *excess of starchy food*, I had become of enormous proportions and had reached a weight of twenty-nine stone. You advised me to procure a good horse and to go in for riding exercise.

At the end of three days my weight had diminished by nearly four stone!

This is a fact! You are quite at liberty to quote my case. But you will do well to add, in order to explain this rapid loss in weight, that I have now lost one of my legs, which had to be amputated in consequence of a fall from my horse the first time I rode him.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. LARTHUR.

BARLEY-SUGAR.

By MAX and ALEX FISHER.

I.

THE proprietor of the shop which bears the sign of "A Hundred Thousand Gloves for Ladies" decided last month to add two male assistants to the sixteen young ladies who attended to the wants of his customers.

Jules Sabouret and myself obtained the posts.

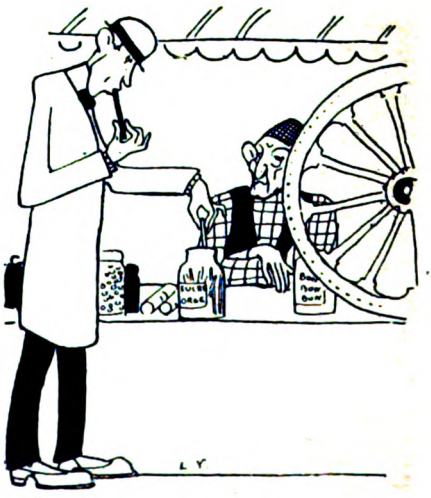
Jules, from the very beginning, succeeded in winning the good graces of the young ladies of the staff. A week after our arrival nothing was to be heard but exclamations of this kind:—

"Ah! Mr. Jules is always full of his jokes. Mr. Jules is the funniest person I ever met in my life. Mr. Jules is the champion spoofer. There's no knowing what trick he'll be up to next."

And so on, and so on, till I was sick of the man's name.

II.

One Wednesday morning, after lunch, I was crossing the Place de la République on my way back to the shop. While passing the stall of an old man who dealt in sweetmeats, I took a fancy to a stick of barley-sugar. I picked one out from a glass jar which stood on the counter, and conveyed it to my mouth. Then I handed the merchant a sou and was about to continue my way, when I was suddenly inspired by a wild idea. The exploits of Mr. Jules had aroused my ambition to achieve equal fame as a "funny fellow" and a "champion spoofer." I put the barley-sugar stick,



which I had begun to suck, back into the jar, and murmuring, "Really, I don't like the taste of that one," I took another.

Then I waited for the storm of the merchant's anger to burst upon me in its fury. What happened? Beaming upon me with an amiable smile, the veteran gave vent to the following staggering remark:—

"Good-bye for the present, sir. I trust I shall have the pleasure of seeing you again!"

III.

In the course of the afternoon I related this incident at the shop. It was received with so much amusement that, much to his annoyance, Mr. Jules was cast into the shade.

"I see nothing funny in that," he declared. "The old man didn't see what you were doing. You ought to have noticed his eyes. That's all there is in it. The old man is blind."

IV.

Yesterday morning at twelve o'clock—lunch time—I made a proposal to the young ladies of the shop.

"Would you allow me, ladies, to conduct you to the barley-sugar stall? You can then ascertain for yourselves whether Mr. Jules is correct in asserting that the stall-keeper is blind."

My offer was accepted with enthusiasm. A quarter of an hour later we stopped before the stall.

I stretched out my hand to the jar, took out a stick of barley-sugar, and sucked it openly and ostentatiously.

I was in the act of returning it to the jar and taking another—two, three, four, ten others—when, to my unbounded astonishment, the merchant stopped me. With a sudden movement he clapped the cover on the jar.

"No, sir; no!" he cried. "You chose that one. You must keep it!"

No doubt my face expressed my stupefaction. He continued:—

"I said 'Keep it!' I can't allow you to suck another.

"Generally," he went on in explanation, "you come here at one o'clock. To-day, it is barely a quarter-past twelve. I am in the habit of sucking those sticks myself after lunch, as dessert. I haven't had my lunch to-day."

I stood gaping. He went on, in a milder tone:—

"But I should be sorry to lose a customer; and, if convenient at your usual time, I shall be pleased to see you then."

TELLING FREDDY A STORY.

By ALPHONSE ALLAIS.

"Once upon a time there was an uncle and a nephew."

"Which was the uncle?"

"Which? Why, the fattest, of course."

"Oh! Are uncles always fat?"

"Very often."

"But Uncle Harry isn't fat."

"Uncle Harry isn't fat because he is an artist."

"Aren't artists ever fat, then?"

"Oh! How can I go on with the story if you keep interrupting?"

"I won't do it again."

"Well, once upon a time there was an uncle and a nephew. The uncle was very, very rich——"

"How much money had he?"

"Seventeen hundred thousand a year, besides houses, carriages, estates——"

"And horses?"

"Of course, as he had carriages."

"Boats? Had he any boats?"

"Yes, fourteen."

"Steamboats?"

"Three of them were steamboats; the others had sails."

"Did his nephew go out in the boats?"

"Oh, do stop asking questions! Do you want me to tell you the story?"

"Oh, yes. I won't ask any more."

"The nephew hadn't a penny in the world—which annoyed him extremely——"

"Why didn't his uncle give him some?"

"Because his uncle was an old miser who liked to keep all his money to himself. Only, as his nephew was the good old man's sole heir——"

"What is an heir?"

"People who take all your money, your furniture, everything you have in the world, as soon as you are dead."

"Then why didn't the nephew kill his uncle?"

"Eh? Well, you *are* a nice young man! He didn't kill his uncle because an uncle mustn't be killed, in any circumstances, even in order to be his heir."

"Why mustn't an uncle be killed?"

"Because of the police."

"But if the police didn't know it?"

"The police always know it. The housekeeper tells them. Besides, you'll see that the nephew was too clever for that. He had noticed that his uncle, after every meal, got very red in the face——"

"Perhaps he was tipsy."

"No; it was his nature. He was apoplectic——"

"What's that—'*aplopecpit*'!"

"Apoplectic. People whose blood goes to the head, and who may die of any strong emotion——"

"Am I apoplectic?"

"No; and you never will be. It is not your nature. Well, the nephew had noticed that a hearty laugh always made his uncle ill, and once, after a long fit of laughter, he almost died."

"People die of laughing, then?"

"Yes, when they're apoplectic. Well, one fine day the nephew called on his uncle just as he was leaving the dinner-table. He had never dined so well in all his life. He was as red as a cock's comb and was wheezing like a grampus——"

"Like the grampuses in the Zoo?"

"Yes. The nephew said to himself: 'Now's the time!' and he began to tell his uncle a funny story——"

"Tell it to me."

"Wait a bit—I'm going to tell you presently. The uncle listened to the story, and he laughed—he laughed till he was doubled up; and before the end of the story he was dead!"

"What was the story?"

"Wait a minute. Then, when the uncle was dead and buried, and the nephew had inherited——"

"Did he take the boats, too?"

"He took everything, as he was the sole heir."

"But what was the story he told his uncle?"

"Well—it was the one I have just told you."

"Which?"

"The story of the uncle and the nephew."

"Why did he laugh at that?"

[*This series of Stories from French Humorists will be continued from time to time.*]

LEADBITTER'S TEST.

By ELLEN ADA SMITH.

Illustrated by E. S. Hodgson.

MR. LEADBITTER was a curio dealer, and a very successful one, although he kept no shop. This necessitated the display of the curios as part of the plenishings of his house, and even the aggregate value of this migratory miscellany, great as it was, did not take away from the effect of crowding, or that jumbling together of household goods ordinarily not on bowing terms, created by the imperious upheaval of an annual cleansing.

Hindu gods of inordinately wicked countenances sat cheek by jowl with Ruth and Boaz, so exquisitely sculptured that every wheat-ear in the sheaf was perfect to the eye. Carved ivory crucifixes hung above hand-painted fans which had been wielded by frail beauty at the Court of Louis XIV. Cats of green jade stared at their inscrutable reflections in Venetian mirrors, while rat-tailed spoons consorted with other silver antiques, sold per ounce at incredible sums.

The magnificent blue of old spode lighted up dim corners, and some of the pictures on the walls were not for any purchaser of modest means.

Mr. Leadbitter's house, somewhat crooked and old-fashioned, was certainly over-full, but no expert could have denied that most of its contents were valuable and some unique. Mr. Leadbitter was proud of his collection, and as he explained her duties to a potential housekeeper and showed her over the house, he made her understand her responsibilities.

Sarah Ellis gave him her respectful attention, but, not being educated up to the acquired taste for cats of green jade, or wicked-looking Hindu gods, she was more curious than enthusiastic. Quite irrespective of value—about which she knew so little—she showed a guileless admiration for what was pretty; a cup and saucer garlanded with rosebuds quite took her fancy; she fingered them gently and appreciatively as she would have fingered real roses, for she was country bred—or had been years ago—and by nature she was a gardener.

"So that is the sort of thing you like, is it?" inquired Mr. Leadbitter, sarcastically; for he always despised non-experts, although he made money out of them too. She admitted that she did like them, adding that she supposed they would come very dear. Mr. Leadbitter became still more sarcastic.

"Why, you could get a whole set for five pounds or less. I give 'em away in change sometimes like a packet of pins; they are common as grass."

Sarah Ellis, rather sensitive to impressions, did not like Mr. Leadbitter, although he was not a stranger to her. He had large, cold, grey eyes under a clever forehead; he loved no human being under the sun, but as a man must love something in order to keep a sane mind in a sound body, he loved his curios, which great knowledge and acumen enabled him to buy cheap and sell dear. He vastly enjoyed attending sales and making the keenest bargains, and the congenial employment would enable him to die rich, which in itself is a very barren victory.

No. She certainly did not take to Mr. Leadbitter, but she had come out of trouble and had not much more in the way of worldly possessions than what she stood up in; but he needed a careful, conscientious woman to housekeep for him and dust his valuables without breaking them. Almost under the guise of showing charity he had sought her for the post, and what Mr. Leadbitter decided upon usually became law.

As they came downstairs from the show-room-in-chief, and Mr. Leadbitter was stating his terms, which were not generous ones, he broke suddenly off to admonish her sharply.

"Mind what you are about, woman! That vase just behind you is worth five hundred guineas! If you flick about in that fashion you will have it over."

She was by no means flounceably dressed, quite the contrary; but under the stimulus of this shock she gathered her meagre respectable garments close about her and floundered down three steps before venturing even to look behind her.

She saw then that on the small landing, where the stairs turned at right angles, there

"DON'T YOU TALK ABOUT THINGS YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! I WOULDN'T TAKE FIVE HUNDRED FOR THAT VASE."

was a big vase niched into the corner, and perched somewhat insecurely, as it seemed to her, upon a Sheraton stool. The vase was quite a miracle of ugliness—ugly enough, in fact, to be of colossal value. But, as before stated, Sarah Ellis was not in the least educated in art values, and she had been too startled not to express herself naturally.

"What! that yellow thing with the nasty serpents crawling all over it worth five hundred pounds? *Never!*"

Mr. Leadbitter frowned upon her sternly from above.

"Don't you talk about things you don't understand! I wouldn't take five hundred for that vase."

She almost gasped at him. "But if it is as valuable as all that, it oughtn't to stand

there on such a silly little stool. Why, the dog or the cat might knock it over, and then it would tumble down the stairs and break all up."

"I don't keep such pests. And you must see to it that the daily girl is kept below stairs."

"But anybody moving about in the dark might——"

"Nobody is allowed to do that in my house. There is electric light everywhere, and if that should fail, candles. I hoped I was dealing with an intelligent woman."

But she was still too flabbergasted to do battle for her intelligence, and kept a fascinated gaze upon the ugly vase, which, on its pedestal, was her own height, or would have been if she had not floundered in her fright three steps down. She thought the decorative snakes abominable, and that only a grossly perverted taste could suffer the hideous whole, much less pay five hundred pounds for it. She had not the least hope of Mr. Leadbitter being able to find a purchaser.

"Have you insured it?" she asked.

"Against thieves and burglars, yes. But not against the carelessness of my servants; that is not possible unless I keep it under lock and key, which would spoil its effect."

This time she wrested her scared eyes away in order to direct them pleadingly towards the cold grey ones, with their calculating shrewdness.

"Wouldn't it look better in the drawing-room, and be so much safer too?"

"The vase is to remain precisely where it is. First impressions are very important, and the presence of such a valuable gives a tone to the whole house."

She agreed silently with this, but she thought the tone a decidedly unholy one, and she considered the Hindu gods as comparatively harmless by the side of this sinister ornament. Already she hated and feared it, but she was to do both these things with more heartiness before she was through with Mr. Leadbitter. But her troubled attitude made him impatient.

"What is the matter with you, when only the most ordinary care is needed? You are not the Great Tun of Heidelberg that you cannot pass up and down, with plenty of room to spare. For the rest, it is a magnificent piece of Wedgwood, and if you cannot appreciate its beauty, that is solely your loss and nobody else's."

His lips wore a sarcastic smile, for, as has already been said, he had a saturnine sense of humour. She did not take to her employer, neither did she find him grow on her as time went on. For Sarah Ellis was a nice-looking woman, who would have done far better in life with more self-assurance; moreover, anyone living in the house where Leadbitter was master required a certain amount of truculence, and of this quality she had none. His dry sarcasms daunted her, and although he was never noisy, he bullied her somewhat and made her afraid of him. Moreover, they were scarcely on the fair terms of employer and *employée*, for, quite innocently in her efforts to make a living, she had become mixed up with very discreditable people. That was why Leadbitter had got her cheap, and he never lost an opportunity of hinting that if he had not taken her up out of charity she might have found it impossible to live by honest means.

This made her position almost intolerable to her, but she saw little hope of breaking loose. Constitutionally timid, she shrank from adventuring. Mr. Leadbitter was certainly the frying-pan, but she had been in the fire, and she might get there again. She disliked her subjection to her employer, of which they were both fully conscious, but her fear of the masterful Leadbitter was little compared with her fear of the Wedgwood vase and its dreadful possibilities. Custom and use never staled her to those; they were ever fresh and ever new in her quaking imagination. If the street door slammed to in a wind she saw the case shaken from its frail foundation and tumbling fatally head over heels down the stairs. If her passing dress but brushed the legs of the Sheraton stool the nerve needles pricked in hands and feet. Her most recurring bad dream was of the vase hurling itself to destruction out of pure devilry; her most comforting one, a vision of the vase railed round, after the manner of a youthful tree, with stout palings.

She left it, for precautionary reasons, totally undusted, until Mr. Leadbitter upbraided her for carelessness; after that she puffed over it gently with a pair of toy bellows, for touch it with her hands she would not.

One day, being in—for her—a somewhat reckless mood, she asked her employer what would happen if, in spite of all precautions, she knocked the vase over and broke it.

"Since you are able-bodied and have your eyesight, the thing cannot possibly happen. But if you broke it in malice—as, of course, it would be—I should sue you for damages."

This stern answer made Sarah Ellis, who

had never borne real malice in her life, still more reckless.

"But you can't get blood out of a stone, Mr. Leadbitter."

"Perhaps not, but I could keep you in my service until you had paid back as much as you could; it would not be a holiday task, which you certainly would not deserve."

Rhadamanthus himself could not have sounded more sternly just. She believed that he was speaking the truth, which he certainly was not, and became frightened of her own shadow if it fell heavily enough upon the Wedgwood vase. She became obsessed with dismal forebodings, and her dream of escaping from thraldom into the pleasant country, where she could let lodgings and have a little garden, almost sighed itself away. Certainly its realization seemed as far off as heaven, or even farther.

She may seem a very silly sort of woman, but she was friendless and lonely and not happy; in such circumstances people get very fanciful, and she was daily being more and more cowed by the masterful Leadbitter, who knew when he had got hold of an extremely conscientious servant. Some equally good business men might have tried to make her content by fair usage and kind consideration; Leadbitter might have done this if he had not fully persuaded himself, while trying to persuade her, that he had taken her out of charity, and was keeping her for the same lofty purpose. He was too clever not to see her flutterings after escape, and try to quiet them by explaining that she was not everybody's money, although she thought she was.

Her open-air life was too scanty to counteract nervous fears, and even when out of doors she was still obsessed by her dark forebodings. It was quite a stunning shock to see one day in a curio shop of good repute an apparently exact replica of the Wedgwood vase down to its last snake. She thought for a panic-stricken second that it was haunting her; but although she decided, on recovery, that this could not yet be the case, she was driven by morbid curiosity to enter the shop and as casually as she could ask the price of the yellow atrocity. The presiding genius, who was young and in shirt-sleeves, seemed singularly unimpressed by the nature of her query.

"Oh, that!" he said, quite lightly, and in an off-hand manner. "There was another of them, and the pair were priced at two guineas; since he is a sort of odd man out, you can have him for nineteen-and-six."

She had nothing to sell, therefore the smallness of the sum need not have staggered her, yet it did. Never once had it occurred to her that anyone in cold blood could attempt a duplicate of the snake-vase, in the vain hope of popularizing it.

"But that's extraordinary," she blurted out. "I know one almost exactly like it worth more than five hundred pounds."

The young man shrugged his shoulders with a singularly unimpressed air. Despite the somewhat unusual stress of her manner, he had already classed her amongst those numerous ones who drift in and out of curio shops without the remotest intention of spending any money.

"Well, I'm not asking five hundred pounds for that one, and if it looks the same it ought to be as good. There is a lot of very ugly stuff about costing a small fortune. Shall I send it home for you at nineteen-and-six?"

Replying very hastily in the negative, she made a hasty exit. She knew perfectly well that Leadbitter dealt in genuine stuff, and that plutocrats, black and white and coloured, came from the ends of the earth to do business with him. One of these plutocrats, a well-placed Englishman with plenty of money to spend on things of good taste, came on a certain day to Leadbitter's house when Leadbitter himself was unavoidably absent. This often happened when the dealer was attending foreign sales, and the gentleman, after presenting credentials from Leadbitter himself, was admitted by Sarah Ellis with a gentle courtesy which attracted his favourable notice.

She was a nice-looking woman, which in Leadbitter's eyes was one of the reasons of her being where she was. He knew that a woman and her surroundings set each other off, and that a graceful figure and gentle manners were better than expert knowledge, of which she had little, although she was learning. The man being of a fine presence, she glanced back at him apprehensively as she began to precede him up the stairs.

"This vase on the landing is very celebrated," she said, timidly. "It is worth more than five hundred pounds."

It wasn't any sort of vicarious boasting; she was merely afraid that he might knock it over in passing. But the millionaire—for he was one—appeared courteously impressed, and, standing stock still before the vase, raised a critical eyeglass. Now, he knew a great deal about these things, and gave the hideous thing his serious attention, while she watched him apprehensively, wishing his safe conduct up and down without any tragic

happening by the way. Dropping his eye-glass, his gaze fell upon her fair, anxious face, and the latent smile which had been in his eyes deepened into a kind one.

"Well, there is no accounting for tastes! I don't think either you or I would give five hundred pounds for that vase."

"I wouldn't have it at a gift, that is if I had to keep it," she answered, hastily, before remembering that she was not there to depreciate her employer's stock-in-trade. But she was quick to lead him out of the danger-zone into comparative safety.

"It is the Benvenuto Cellini water-jug you especially wish to see, is it not?"

"If you please. I have two foolish young friends getting married, and as plenty of hot water is sure to be the order of the day—in more senses than one—I think I may like to give them the Cellini jug."

Now, the jug was a thing of great beauty, and one of her especial admirations. She had often thought that the silver jug so exquisitely designed, married to a teapot of similar style and with a family of the rose-bud cups and saucers, would have been just perfect in any home worthy of the name. She handled it with the love of the housewife, if not with the critical admiration of the virtuoso, and the client sensed this.

"Ah!" he said, heartily, "I see that we both of us like pretty things. This jug would be charming if it had only been made yesterday. I don't think I can do better than this, but I will just look round."

He did look round with a very discerning eye, but nothing pleased him so well as the Cellini jug, which she promised should be set aside until he had communicated with Mr. Leadbitter, for she was never permitted to conclude bargains. But this man had a very discerning eye for more than curios, and as they descended the stairs her shrinking fear of the vase became patent to him, and he decided that she was not only nervous, but chronically worried and anxious. He knew Leadbitter very well, and he had more than an idea that his could be a very hard service, especially for the meek in spirit.

With a large, easy movement, which actually brushed one of the snakes and made her quake with panic, he turned upon her.

"I do believe that ugly invention has got upon your nerves. Why upon earth do you worry about it?"

"I only worry because, for such a valuable thing, I consider its position most terribly unsafe. But Mr. Leadbitter will have it just there, and nowhere else."

"Well, what of that? My dear lady, if it worries you so much, take my advice and kick it right down the stairs, or let me have the pleasure of doing it for you, and then not all the king's horses nor all the king's men could set up the bogey again."

He spoke with breezy heartiness. She thought him a lunatic, but extremely kind. But she was far too frightened to mind what she said, and even her lips had turned white.

"If I broke that vase I believe Mr. Leadbitter would kill me."

The man laughed quite unfearfully, but he watched her a little curiously, too. "Not a bit of it! Why upon earth should he, any more than I should if you, by an unlucky chance, knocked off my silk hat into the mud? Accidents will happen, you know, to the cleverest of us."

She tried to retract her hysterical accusation, but she was still too flustered to be entirely discreet.

"I didn't mean that, of course. But if harm came to that thing through me, I should never be able to get away from here; and I hate London; I *hate* it so!"

He appeared to understand perfectly; in reality, he was considerably perplexed and very sorry for her.

"Look here," he said, confidentially. "If the thing is in your way, and I see it is, I will buy the whole ugly bag of tricks, snakes and all; and then it will be *out* of your way—see!"

She still thought him a lunatic, because he spoke of spending five hundred pounds and more on a thing he did not like as other men speak of buying a penn'orth of matches. But she had got him past the dangerous landing, and she hoped for the best, for no lunacy could blind her to his real kindness of heart.

"You must not think of it," she said, soothingly. "You do not even like it, you know, while Mr. Leadbitter thinks far more of it than of the Cellini jug."

"Does he?" said the man, very dryly. "You surprise me. All the same, I am going to buy it; I will tell him so in my note. Meanwhile, if anything happens to the brute or you knock it over with a Turk's-head broom, come straight to me. Here is my name and address."

He bestowed his card upon her, and after a hearty handshake he was gone.

He might have been some genie, so wonderful were the things that happened in a comparatively short time—grievous happenings, some of them, which might so easily have

ended in totally unnecessary tragedy. In the first place, it was perfectly true that the plutocrat Strover was a purchaser of the vase no less than the Cellini jug, and, although Leadbitter had made excellent prices of both, he did not seem pleased to have disposed of the vase.

"I shall have to get another," he told Sarah Ellis, somewhat gloomily. "I may have a difficulty about it; but another I must have. The thing has made its value over and over again by just standing where it does."

Her heart sank even lower than its wont, and she hoped with as much fervour as her depressed life permitted that his difficulty of replacing what he evidently regarded as a mascot would remain insuperable.

"Why did you let him have it?" she asked, weakly, seeing that the cold grey eyes demanded some sort of sympathy from her.

"Because he is one of my best clients, and I could not help letting him have it. Seemed crazed about the thing, and although I tried a fancy price nothing would put him off it."

So this more than amiable lunatic had given a fancy price, in order to ensure her greater comfort and peace of mind. She could not fathom such fantastic generosity, and she might constantly have wondered over it, if a still more stupendous happening had not put it out of her head for the time. An uncle whom she had never even seen died in Australia leaving her a legacy of four hundred pounds.

Not Strover with his million, not any plutocrat past or present, knew or could ever know the rapture of release and glad expectation which filled her then. Not the most joyous young bride, nor the triumph of genius, could have excelled her in keenness of sensation. So uplifted was she that she lost all fear of Leadbitter, telling him without a tremor, save of gladness, of her good fortune and giving a month's notice. She would more than willingly have paid in lieu of notice and gone out into freedom there and then, but being conscientious and honest to the last degree, she could not leave even a hard master without duly regarding his convenience. Flushed and happy, she faced his stern indignation almost without flinching.

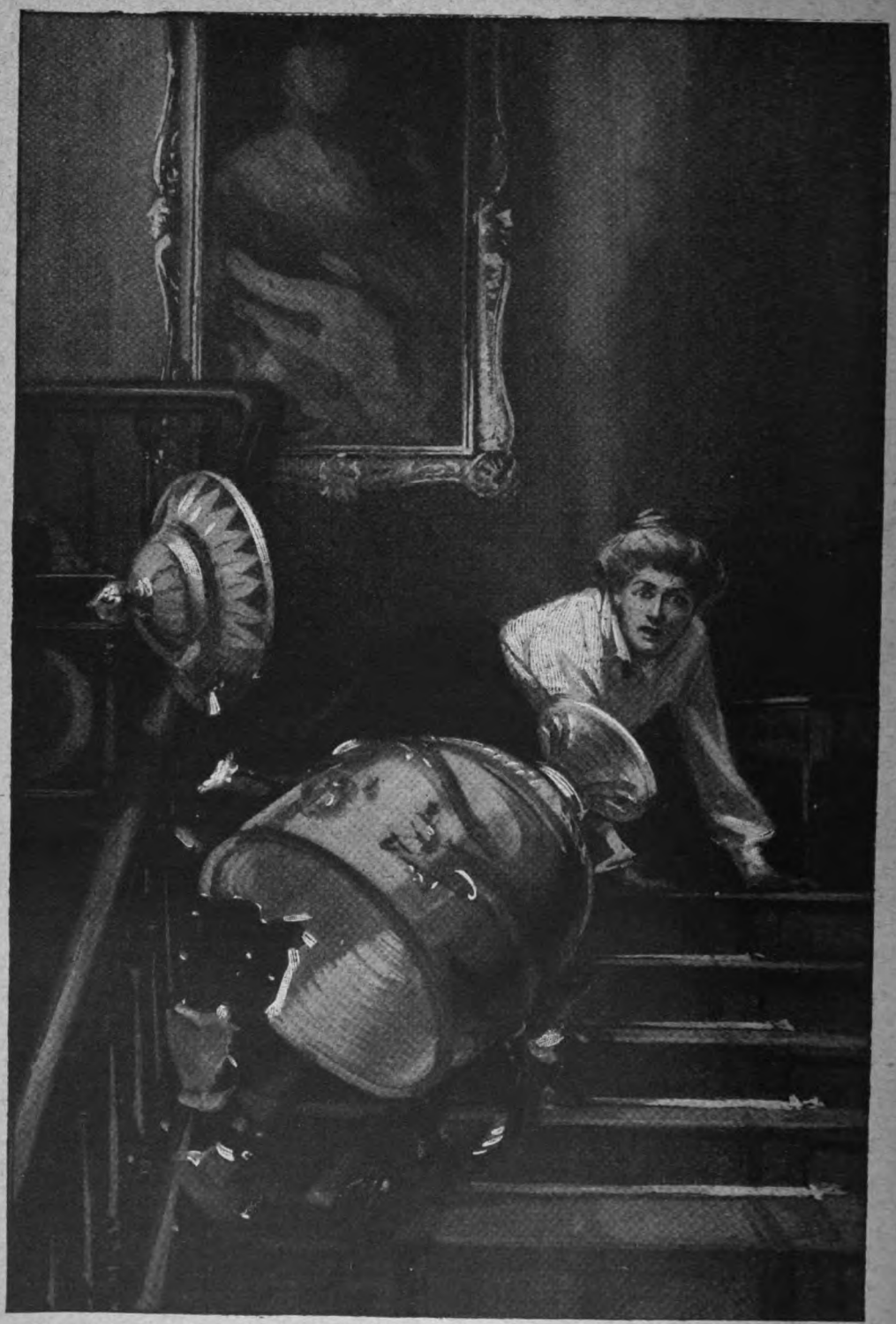
"I consider," he told her, "that you are behaving with the blackest ingratitude. I give you employment and a comfortable home, when others would have regarded you with suspicion. I show you kindness when most would have shut the door in your face, and my reward for this is, that when you come into a bit of money you forget all gratitude, and want to go your own selfish way at once."

But at that supremely happy moment Boanerges himself could not have shouted her down. She told him that she had been a cheap and faithful servant, and that she owed him nothing.

"Brush my hat," he ordered, imperiously, "and let me hear no more of this nonsense. You have lived like a lady with all the rough work done for you, and things are to go on precisely as usual."

She brushed his hat, but his bullying had lost all power. She had no longer the least fear of him, which was quite right. Perhaps it was less fortunate that at the same time she lost all fear of the Wedgwood vase which was waiting in its somewhat precarious corner for the packer; certain it was that she sat down on the top stair in the very shadow of it, to lose herself in happy day-dreams—day-dreams which should materialize dazzlingly in the very near future. She saw herself the mistress of a pleasant little house, the owner of a modest country garden full of sweet-smelling flowers planted and nurtured by her own hand. With these innocent and wholesome lures, she would compel nice tourists and detain them with the cunning wiles of good housewifery. They would come and they would go, these nice tourists, but the little home would remain sacred to her and the little garden be a perennial joy. Sitting on the dull staircase, she could smell the intoxicating perfume of sweetbrier, and her heaviest perplexity in that halcyon moment was connected with the proper season for planting rose trees. Above all, she would be free and no longer under the squat thumb of Leadbitter, with her self-respect—which she had done nothing to forfeit—blighted and withered by his calculated contempt.

Oh, she was happy, a thousand times happy! If she had died the next moment she would still have known the delirium of joy which some of us never know to our life's end. But she did not die; she did worse, for she broke the Wedgwood vase. In the sublime carelessness born of sheer rapture, she rose heedlessly up, appeared to miscalculate the precise height of the stair she had been sitting on, and stumbled forward on hands and knees helplessly. She was not conscious of more than slightly jarring the Sheraton stool, but she was agonizingly conscious of the heavy vase toppling over her head and depositing itself clumsily and in fragments on the hall beneath. Medusa herself might



"SHE WAS AGONIZINGLY CONSCIOUS OF THE HEAVY VASE TOPPLING OVER HER HEAD AND DEPOSITING ITSELF IN FRAGMENTS ON THE HALL BENEATH."

have shorn her locks there, so full was that hall of unattached snakes.

For the second time the woman sat on the stair, but now in frozen despair. Many panic-stricken souls have committed suicide for less, and the thing was in her mind, terribly in her mind, as she felt herself more bound than ever to the implacable Leadbitter, with the triumphant pressure of his squat thumb more bitterly heavy upon her. For she never doubted of his power and ability to exact all her legacy and the rest of the debt in personal service. She felt the old shackles doubly strong, and the vision of the pleasant little house and sweet-scented garden looked once more as far off as heaven, until she suddenly remembered Strover as surely now the real owner of the vase. Of course, the debt was the same, and she must pay it if she possibly could, but Strover would be a more merciful creditor, and had he not himself invited her to seek him in case of accident? Of course, it might be a forlorn hope, but it might be better than Regent's Canal or the Leg of Mutton Pond.

Without waiting even to brush up the ugly pieces and the detached snakes, she fared forth, and very fortunately found Strover at home; if she had not, the temptation to total oblivion might possibly have been too strong for her, because Leadbitter had cowed and broken her spirit. Fortunately again, Strover not only remembered her face, but all about her, and that she was there by his own request.

"Glad to see you," he said, heartily. "I suppose someone has waltzed off with my Cellini jug. Confound the beggar, whoever he is, and his darned good taste in burglary."

She steadied herself by a hand on a light table, and the silver lamp on it vibrated.

"Mr. Strover, I've broken the Wedgwood vase."

She was past seeing how his face lighted up, deaf to the amused relief of his exclamation.

"Good business! and blessed be the Turk's-head broom. I was just wondering where my rubbish cart could dump the contraption, for I do not care to frighten even the crows too much."

The silver lamp ceased to vibrate as she moved her hand to his arm.

"Mr. Strover, I've only four hundred pounds—yesterday I had only a few shillings. I would far rather pay you for the vase than Mr. Leadbitter, if—if you will give me time."

His amusement vanished, and very kindly he put her into a chair.

"My dear woman! How much do you think I gave for that very ugly fake? I gave thirty shillings, just in order to get it out of your way, and, as I told Leadbitter, it was just fifteen shillings too much. I know exactly his reason for having it there; it helped him to sort out those who were experts and those who were not. If a greenhorn accepted that fake and believed in it, Leadbitter could ask what he liked for his curios. If, like myself, he knew better and was no greenhorn, Leadbitter had to practise fairer dealing. I don't doubt he found it a most useful test."

But in the intensity of her relief, Sarah Ellis had failed to hear the whole explanation, and Strover had to summon his wife and call for brandy before they could get colour or sense back into her white lips. Then, being tactful and kindly folk, they got all her story out of her, down to the legacy and the vision splendid of the little house with roses in its garden, which had so suddenly gone out into black darkness.

"Look here!" said Mr. Strover, after she had finished. "You go back and pack your box for a month at the seaside while I square it with Leadbitter. I owe you something for destroying that hideous purchase of mine, and when you have recovered your nerve we will talk business again."

Strover did not overwhelm Sarah Ellis with kindness. He merely supervised her business and saw to it as far as he might that no man cheated her. He found her the right sort of house and the garden of her dreams, but she paid for all the plenishings, although Mrs. Strover went shopping with her. The only things supplied by them consisted of a silver tea set with rosebud china cups and saucers. In a modest, quiet fashion—the fashion best suited to her—she flourished, and her nice tourists came again and again, for she mothered them well.

But Leadbitter lost an excellent patron, for Strover would have no further dealings with him.

PAPERS OF THE FIRING-LINE.

THE humour of Tommy and Jack is proverbial. It simmers, bubbles, and, in the face of stern discipline and untold dangers, boils over at every opportunity. It is the finest cure for pessimism that could be imagined. Our soldiers and sailors refuse to allow their effervescent spirits to be crushed by the serious business of war, and one has only to read their letters to appreciate their light-heartedness and the cheerfulness with which they fight our battles for us.

They have another outlet, however, for their humour. Since the war began, regiments and ships' crews have entered the publishing business. For the interest and amusement of their relatives and friends in the first place, they founded weekly and monthly periodicals, in which they have chronicled their doings in the field and on the seas so far as the Censor would allow; chaffed everyone from the commander down to the cook, and afforded the poets, artists, journalists, and funny men of the Services opportunities for displaying their talents.

In the French army and navy, too, the fighting editor is very much in evidence, and many bright papers and magazines chronicle the doings of the regiments, battalions, and ships' crews of our brave Allies. It is an extraordinary fact, however, that, although searching inquiries have been made, there has been no trace of a single similar effort on the part of the Germans. Evidently the Hun is not permitted by his taskmasters the literary relaxation which the fighting men of the British and French forces find so interesting and entertaining.

Roughly speaking, these war journals may be divided into three classes, the first being actually printed and produced in the fighting-line on land and sea. When one comes to consider this fact, their literary and artistic standard is astonishing.

Picture to yourself a war-worn, mud-stained, tin-helmeted warrior, seated in a dimly-lighted dug-out, with shells screaming overhead, comrades chatting, sleeping, and snoring around him, striving by candlelight to make up and print the little paper which his regiment will await on the morrow. Carefully he scans the contributions which aspiring comrades have handed him—jokes, old and new, of the regiment; verses, more often than not to the girl left behind; good-humoured personal skits; witty, caustic comments voicing the men's opinions of what they are enduring, and sketches and descriptions of the day's fighting and work—vivid human stories, pregnant with the horrors of the war which is daily slaying men by the thousand.

Quickly sorting the wheat from the chaff, the fighting editor takes out his small framed sheet of prepared gelatine or war stencil-paper, and, measuring up the required amount of "copy," proceeds to write it out carefully, decorating the pages, so far as he is able, with fancy initial letters and head and tail pieces. The writing and drawing finished, he proceeds, with the aid of roller and copying ink, to pull off a number of copies, working methodically and quickly, for time is precious. His military duties will call him soon, when he must leave the pen for the bayonet.

Often you will find him working at dawn when the "stand at arms" order is passed along the trench to repel any attack the Hun may have prepared during the night. Tired and weary though he may be, however, he is happy in the knowledge of the accomplishment of his editorial duties. Lack of material makes it impossible to pull off more than sixty or seventy copies of one issue, the last numbers of the limited circulation being very difficult to read. The best printed copies are handed to the officers, the men of the section eagerly purchasing the others. The paper passes from section to section, being often exchanged for the productions of other regimental editors, the chatty contents and comments keeping the men informed of the doings of their comrades in other parts of the line.

In the early days of the war many English trench papers were produced in this manner. Some did not survive the first number, while others grew in popularity to such an extent that the "copy," after being edited in trench and dug-out, was sent to some printers at the Base and published in the form of quite imposing journals. An early issue of the *Fifth Glo'ster Gazette*, for instance, one of the best and brightest of trench papers, was produced in the trenches while under heavy fire, while No. 3 Section Signal Company, attached 144th Infantry Brigade, also produced a "little rag," as they termed it, while in the firing-line.

The *Talbot Observer and Dardanelles Gazette* claims to be the only naval paper actually published under fire, the editorial offices of H.M.S. *Talbot* having been practically shelled every day while the fourteenth issue was being prepared.

A bright little ship's journal, too, was the *Natal Newsletter*, the organ of the ill-fated cruiser H.M.S. *Natal*, which, on New Year's Day, 1916, was sunk in harbour by an internal explosion. Issued weekly, its contents were advertised on the wrapper as "humour, pathos, and swank." Each issue was produced in the handwriting of the editor, "Bun Tyng," otherwise R. C. Wilson—"Bunting" is the usual nickname of the yeoman of the signals on board ship—who, the writer is glad to say, was among the saved, copies in cyclostyle being sold at one penny. But "Bun Tyng" could claim that "We are the pioneers of the game, entirely ship-produced, and the cheapest and brightest of the group." Certainly he had every reason to be proud of his "hash-up," as he termed the *Newsletter*.

H.M.S. *Erin* followed the example of the *Natal*, and produced a magazine called the *Erin*

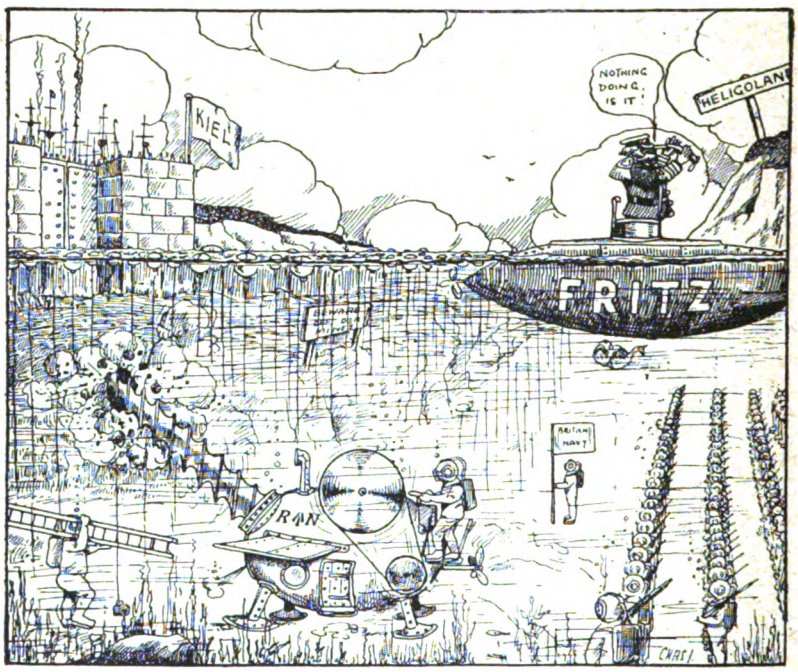
A CLEVER COVER DESIGN.

"NOT ON OUR MOVIES."

FROM THE "NATAL NEWSLETTER," A PAPER PRODUCED ON BOARD H.M.S. "NATAL," WHICH WAS SUNK IN HARBOUR ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1916.

Echo, which is now printed in London. The first number, however, was done in cyclostyle.

"The question of running a paper or magazine on board ship at the present time," writes the editor, "is a very difficult one, having regard to the fact of strict censorship of our constant movements at sea, and not forgetting the troubles of printing, etc. I send you one of our first attempts, printed on board, and hope you will be able to read it—I can't."



A SUGGESTION FOR ATTACKING KIEL.
FROM THE "NORTH SEA TIMES," PUBLISHED ON BOARD H.M.S. "KING EDWARD VII."

However, the printing trouble was apparently overcome, and the *Erin Echo* ranks as one of the best ships' journals in the Navy.

One might also refer here to what was undoubtedly the most imposing and ambitious ship's magazine—the *North Sea Times*—published on H.M.S. *King Edward VII.*, sunk by a mine a few days after the disaster to the *Natal*. The history of the *North Sea Times* provides a rather interesting story. "It sprang into being," says the editor, "in the latitude of the Faroe Islands, the day immediately following that upon which war was declared with Germany, *i.e.*, August 5th. At first it was a weekly publication, typewritten and duplicated. About thirty were disposed of at first, but there came such a rush as completely overwhelmed the maximum possible output. A second edition was run off, however, and easily disposed of.

"The second number had a circulation of seventy-five. The paper grew frightfully popular and the demands were enormous. The Admiral was keenly interested in the work at all times. The thing went on so until Christmas of 1914, when by great and superhuman effort the journal appeared printed, but with duplicated illustrations, and attained a circulation of four hundred. This was deemed an extraordinary height for a naval journal to reach, but steadily everything continued to improve. The duplicated illustrations were dropped and everything was printed.

"The February number was dedicated to His Majesty the King, who was paying us a visit at that time, and he very graciously accepted a copy to read *en route* South. Finally, the great crash came with the publication of number fourteen, which reached a circulation of twelve thousand, a thing I have every reason to believe no other journal, actually edited and published on board, has ever attained, or ever will for that matter. The thing was considered to be growing too extensive, and the authorities requested that it should cease."

Number fourteen of the *North Sea Times* was thus the last of a brief but merry and eventful career. Later, however, a

very striking presentation plate was printed and issued, copies of which were desired by all the admirals in the Grand Fleet and the Commander-in-Chief, Sir John Jellicoe.

Regimental magazines, however, outnumber considerably those of the Navy, and among the most interesting of those belonging to the second class, *i.e.*, those edited in the trenches and printed by the editor and his assistants on small hand presses, might be mentioned the *Honk*, the lively organ of the D.A.P. (Divisional Ammunition Park) Australian, which was first produced on the troopship which conveyed the men to France and is now printed "every sometimes" for the Australian Ammunition Park on the field of France.

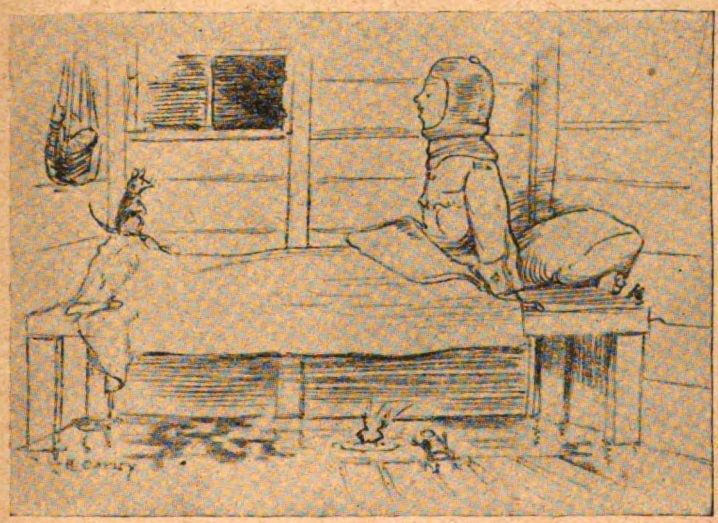
Another interesting production of the Colonial troops bears the curious title of *Mokoian*—"the name being selected," the editor observes in the first number, "because the publication relates to the units on His Majesty's New Zealand troopship No. 43, which is in reality the old spume-throwing *Mokoia* we knew in more peaceful times as the useful coastal and inter-colonial trader."

The *Mokoian* is a very spirited publication indeed, with illustrations, and when the vessel reached a port during the voyage a special number was issued from a press on shore.

The Canadian troops, too, displayed keen journalistic enterprise by producing the *Twentieth Gazette*, issued at the battalion headquarters of the 20th Canadians "somewhere in France."

It would seem that many of the editors of the curious trench journals which have come over to this country have a perfect genius for inventing queer and bizarre titles for their publications. The *Pow-Wow*, for instance, is the journal of the 20th Battalion Royal Fusiliers. The title conveys some sort of intelligent idea to the minds of most people, but *Pip-Squeaks* is a puzzling title, until one learns on glancing through its pages that "pip-squeak" is a small kind of German shell, so called by Tommy from the noise it makes when fired.

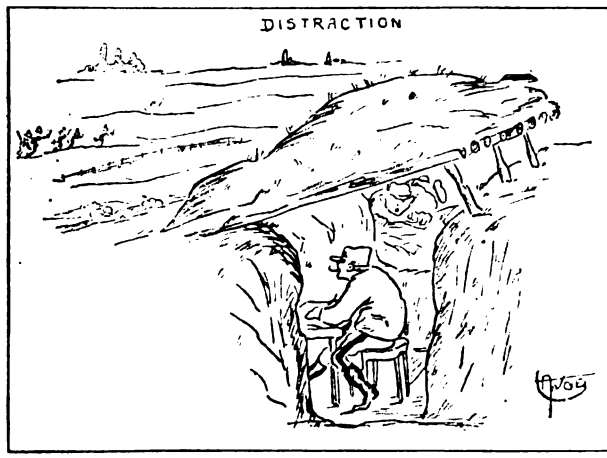
The curiously-named *Comb and Paper* reports and criticizes concerts and other similar entertainments at the Front; a sort of trench *Era*, in fact. The *Hangar Herald* presents no difficulties to anyone who knows that a "hangar" is the name of aeroplane sheds. The paper deals, as it name implies, with the doings of our aviators at the Front.



"WAR MAKES STRANGE BEDFELLOWS."
FROM "THE DUMP."

The *Gasper* is a paper published, so its editor informs us, "for soldiers at the Base," and he goes on to say that "The Base is a place where troops are kept until they are so fed up that they don't mind getting killed." This is all right; but why *Gasper?*

Yet another of these curiously-named ventures in active service journalism is entitled *Dicksey Scrapings*, and its sub-title, which is at least self-explanatory, even if somewhat diffuse, is as follows: "The only Authorized Version of the Doings of the Honourable and Ancient Order of the Cooks of the Artists' Rifles."



ABSENCE OF MIND.

"Lieutenant, the Germans are here!"

Lieutenant (Government official before the war): "Thanks—thanks! Well, let them wait a little."

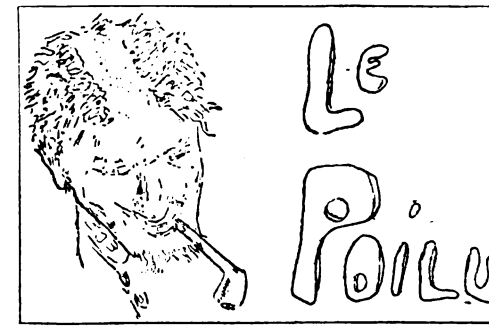
FROM "AH BATH."

Some of the war journals which belong to the third class—the copy being sent over to this country to be printed and published—are quite imposing. *Stray Shots*, for instance, which reports the doings of No. 3 Section R.E. Signal Co., attached 144th Brigade, 48th Division (Infantry), is very handsomely printed on glazed paper by the *Bristol Times and Mirror*, while one of the latest of regimental magazines, *Fall In*, the official organ of the Middlesex Regiment (The Duke of Cambridge's Own), "produced for soldiers by soldiers," is remarkable alike for the excellence of its stories and illustrations.

The same remark applies to the *Dump*, which chronicles the doings of the 23rd Division once a year only. No. 1 of Volume 1 was published last Christmas, and in his foreword the editor promised that "Every Christmas, as long as the war lasts, we promise to 'come out.' Six numbers go to the volume, and handsome binding cases will be available from the R.E. stores when each volume is complete. . . . Volumes are not to be regarded as trench stores, and those used for building bomb-proofs, revetments, or footboards cannot be replaced."

The *Grey Brigade* is the official "rag," to quote one of the staff, of the London Territorial units, which in times of peace were well known by their grey uniforms.

It is not claimed that this in any way exhausts the names and numbers of regimental and ships' magazines. It would require many more pages to do justice to them all and to pay tribute to the merits of their contents. The reader, however, who is interested in the subject may be referred to the British Museum, which is endeavouring to collect these magazines and thus form a unique national record of the journalistic enterprises of our fighting men.



THE TITLE HEADING OF ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR FRENCH TRENCH PAPERS.

"LAUGHING GAS."

In Three Chapters.

By ARUNDEL BEGBIE ("ANDRUL").

I.

MR. HUMPHREY BESSINGER pushed through the swing-doors which gave entrance to the depressing dining-room of the Sea View Hotel and walked with the certitude of habit to the table which had been allotted to him on his arrival ten days before. He stood glaring at it in amazement. It was laid for two, and, instead of his *Times*, the *Daily Telegraph* reposed on one side, while the *Morning Post* mocked him with smug self-complacency on the other. He tapped sharply on the call bell, and turned to watch the approach of an anæmic young waiter whose face expressed anxiety to please and dread of giving offence, nicely blended.

"Oh, we've moved your seat, sir."

"Then what the dickens did you do it for? This has been my table ever since I came here, and when I want to change I'll let you know."

"I'm very sorry, sir."

"Then just take away one of these places and both of those papers and bring me my *Times*."

"I'm very sorry——"

"You've said so before, and I don't want to hear it again. Get the matter put right as quickly as you can."

"But this is the only table left capable of holding two seats, sir, and we have to provide for two new-comers, so we gave you that smaller table there, sir. We thought you wouldn't mind."

"If you thought that, you'd better consult a thought-specialist. Your thinking apparatus has got a puncture, or is miss-firing, or something."

"I'm very——"

"For Heaven's sake don't say that again!" Mr. Bessinger interrupted, irritably.

"What's to be done, sir?" queried the waiter, meekly.

The guest looked at the little table prepared for him. He saw that it was every whit as comfortably situated as the other, that it could by no possible means be made to accommodate more than one, so he ungraciously surrendered, and moved to his new seat.

The doors began to swing at frequent intervals and the guests to seat themselves in a gloom consistent with, if not directly due to, the menu.

A couple entered—a man and a woman. Mr. Bessinger treated their arrival as he had done that of all the others—that is, he never looked up from his *Times*, but when they made for the table immediately in front of his—the very table from which he had been ousted—he raised his eyes with considerable resentment, but with no curiosity. The resentment evaporated even as his eyes took in the pair, and curiosity reigned in its stead.

The woman led the way. She was tall and slight, and her simple morning costume satisfied a somewhat critical taste in the matter of women's dress. Her hair was a dark brown, which caught a deep chestnut glow from where the sun touched it. He could not tell the colour of her eyes, he did not try to. He was too absorbed in noting the almost insolent pride of her carriage and face as she approached the table. Her companion was a man of about sixty, whose hair was silvered with the rime of years. He looked delicate, and an almost womanish sweetness of expression heightened the impression. He was shorter than the woman, and about twice her age—or, at least, so Mr. Bessinger judged.

"This is our table, father," she said, and her voice was clear and just loud enough to hint at a self-confidence consistent with her appearance.

Mr. Bessinger felt vastly relieved to learn the relationship without any ostensible reason for his satisfaction. She sat with her profile to him, her left side being towards him, and his eyes travelled at once to her hand to search for tell-tale rings, but all he saw was the most beautiful hand he had ever beheld. It held his gaze for several seconds, and then, being by nature hypercritical, he wished

"SHE SAT WITH HER FEET DRAWN UNDER HER CHAIR; THEY WERE PARTIALLY WITHDRAWN FROM HER SHOES."

to satisfy himself as to her feet. She sat with her feet drawn under her chair; they were partially withdrawn from her shoes, and her stockinged heels rested on the bar of the chair. Mr. Bessinger felt annoyed. It was impossible to estimate correctly the lines and curves of the feet; besides, it was a reprehensible habit; once noticed, it was apt to

provoke one to look again. However, the shoes told him something. They were long and slim, and altogether exactly what he would have chosen to complete the appearance he had just examined from head downwards. He informed the waiter that he would certainly be in for lunch—an unusual happening.

Mr. Humphrey Bessinger held a Civil Service appointment of some importance which kept him travelling for several months in the year. He was always inspecting or reporting on something, which occupation, added to a certain sense of disappointment with what life had given him, tended to make him cynical and critical. His great disappointment had been love. From his boyhood he had been in love with love, and had sought it unceasingly, only too ready to believe he had found it. But his credulity invariably succumbed to the shock of discovery, and he grew at length to believe that he was destined to carry to the grave the wealth of sympathy, tenderness, and devotion which he knew he could lavish on the one woman, if only he could find her. The sight of the stranger in the hotel stirred him strangely. He found it impossible to fetter his errant thoughts, which strayed ever to the figure he had left sitting at the table. He congratulated himself on the possibilities of hotel life. Opportunity was sure to offer for an acquaintanceship—a trivial act of politeness, such as opening a door, or something like that. His cynicism left him, and he pursued his dream with all the ardour of a boy.

He feasted his eyes on her daily at breakfast, lunch, and dinner; he noted her gestures, her little tricks of manner; he appreciated her beauty, and the way in which she dressed; he learnt to be annoyed if she did not withdraw her heels from her shoes and rest them on the bars of her chair, and he worshipped her from the crown of her head to the toes of her feet in distant reverence and desire. There it ended. She gave no sign of having perceived his existence, a fact which would have ordinarily goaded him to a gentlemanly fury. But this was not an ordinary case, and the humility which a great love brings with it inspired him to think it meet and right that this goddess on her pedestal should ignore his presence. His work at that particular town came to an end at last, and he was turning away from the manager's office after settling his bill when he came face to face with the beauty. She looked him serenely in the eyes, with a little friendly hint of a smile in her own, but it was a smile which could not have tempted the most hardened "bounder" to a familiarity. Mr. Bessinger was not a "bounder," and the only effect it had on him was to send a shiver of adoration throughout his being.

II.

Mr. Humphrey Bessinger's work took him here, there, and everywhere, and two months elapsed before the opening of the second chapter of his romance.

He had come to the small town of Otterbeach as a centre from which he could easily get to his work, and on the day after his arrival was proceeding in a hired motor to Stonecombe, where his work for the nonce lay. He had covered six of the ten miles, when his chauffeur slowed down in order to pass a disabled car which occupied rather more than its share of the road. A woman stood by the door of the car, and she glanced curiously at Mr. Bessinger's vehicle.

"Stop!" called out that gentleman, and before his order could be wholly complied with he was out in the road, being buffeted by the wind, which came in great gusts across the sea.

"Can I be of any help to you?" he asked, his face radiant with a great gladness.

"I'm afraid not," she replied, a little wistfully. "It's most unfortunate that the machinery should have chosen this windy day for its exploit, as my father is delicate, and could not stand the exposure of a walk."

Mr. Bessinger became aware of the refined old face at the window of the car and also of the luggage on the roof. Up till then the only discovery he achieved was that her eyes were grey—beautiful grey eyes with large pupils, and redolent of truth.

"Are you going far?"

"Only to Otterbeach."

"There's a very simple way out of the difficulty. You take my car and I'll walk on——"

"I couldn't think of doing that," she interrupted. "It's more than kind of you, but I certainly should not think of taking advantage of such kindness."

"Do you think I could go on and leave you here? Of course you will take my car."

She raised her brows slightly at the peremptoriness of his tone, and the corners of her mouth confirmed the smile in her eyes. It was rather amusing being ordered like this, and an absolutely new experience.

"And what will you do?" she asked.

"The walk to Stonecombe won't hurt me,

and you can send my man after me when you have got to your destination, if you will be so kind. Besides "—he interrupted himself—" that's got nothing to do with it; you are certainly going to have the car. Here, Jackson," he called to his driver, " just come and give a hand with this luggage."

" I feel dreadfully ashamed of accepting your offer, or ought I to say of obeying your orders ? " She sent a friendly challenging smile to his eyes.

He laughed.

" Call it what you will so long as you will let me do you a service." He said it earnestly, and she was puzzled by his earnestness while conscious of a predisposition to like this stranger.

She explained matters to the old man in the car, who expressed his gratitude.

" We are staying at the Beach Hotel," he ended, " and should be so pleased if you will come and see us."

" I'm staying there myself," answered Mr. Bessinger, in whose heart joy was singing a deafening jubilate.

" Then perhaps you will come and have your coffee with us after dinner to-night ? " invited the older man.

" I shall be delighted," said Mr. Bessinger, and he turned and looked into the grey eyes of the woman with triumph shining in his own.

The evening was a delight. The old man, whose name he discovered to be Sheridan, was a scholar and a man of marked refinement. They smoked and talked until his host rose and said :—

" You will excuse my going, won't you ? I keep very early hours, and to-day has been a trying one, although it has ended so pleasantly." He smiled and gave a little old-world courtly bow. " But please do not hurry away; my daughter will be glad of your company, and indeed she is your hostess, for I am her guest here."

Mr. Bessinger's heart beat with excitement.

" Yes, please stay," she added. " Up till now I have had to listen, and I'm longing to talk."

After the two had resumed their seats constraint fell on Mr. Bessinger, a constraint which gradually succumbed to the frankness of the woman's conversation. But he was obsessed with the necessity of letting her see the altar which he had built in his heart in her honour; he grudged the waste of time. He was of an age when one realizes the importance of time, the futility of its waste.

" We have met before," he said at last. " I wonder if you remember it ? "

" Then my intuition was right. I felt sure I had seen you somewhere. Where was it ? "

He told her the whole episode, and she laughed heartily at his description.

" I feel like Jacob," she said, " and I always hated Jacob from my earliest childhood. These two times have I supplanted you. First your table and now your car. Will you ever forgive me ? "

" Yes; I did not grudge losing my table when I saw you come into the room," he said.

" Why ? " she challenged.

" I'll tell you some day," he answered, " when I have known you longer. You'd think me an escaped lunatic if I told you now."

An intimacy sprang up between the three. Every night Mr. Bessinger took his coffee in their sitting-room, and every night the older man retired and left the other two together. The woman was one to whom love was essential. She had had plenty of flattery, plenty of the incense of admiration, but she had never had love. She had indulged wholeheartedly in flirtations and gained no small amusement therefrom, besides an extensive knowledge of men, and she entered into what she deemed a flirtation now with full knowledge of what she was doing, and an anticipation that she was going to enjoy it thoroughly. Mr. Bessinger introduced novelty into his methods. He did not linger in his lovemaking. At first she laughed at him, then she began to wonder. He was different from the others, who had impressed her with their desire to take everything. This man craved only to give. He never presumed to demand her love, but was content to be allowed to worship her in a very bewildering, headstrong fashion. She began to depend on him to do the many little things for her which only a man can do for a woman, and for the doing of which her father's health and ignorance of the world unfitted him. She also became accustomed to his adoration of her, and felt ill at ease and unsettled on the one evening which he had to spend away from the hotel.

When Mr. Bessinger's work was drawing to an end she suggested that they should visit his next scene of duty, and her father eagerly welcomed the suggestion. He liked the younger man and admired him. So the trio left for Hitherstrand together, and the friendship continued under ever more favourable circumstances. It was here that he asked her why she wore no ring.

"BEFORE HE REALIZED WHAT HE WAS DOING HE HAD TAKEN HER IN HIS ARMS."

"My marriage was the great unhappiness of my life," she said. "The recollection of it is hateful and abominable to me, and the sight of my wedding-ring would be loathsome to me. The day which made me a widow I took off my ring and threw it into the sea."

She had on a dinner-gown which he loved, and very winsome she looked in it as she stood, one foot resting on the fender. They had risen when her father had gone from the room, and had not reseated themselves.

"You poor little soul!" he exclaimed, with an infinite pity and horror in his voice. To him it was a blasphemy that anyone could have ill-treated his beloved among women. Before he realized what he was doing he had taken her in his arms and was kissing her with passion and yet tenderness, and she made no resistance. It was then that the sound of steps in the hall caused them to start apart, and a maid brought in a small parcel which she said had arrived that afternoon, but which she had forgotten to bring in before. It was a little package tied with a bit of fancy string.

"Oh, my new earrings," she exclaimed. "You must tell me what you think of them," and she unfastened the string; then, seized by a passing whim, she tied it round his wrist as he held the parcel, looking up into his eyes with a shy, sweet look of conscious power the meanwhile.

"You dear!" exclaimed Mr. Bessinger, and again, "You dear! I'll keep that as long as I live. It shall be my engagement-ring." If ever love lay naked in a man's eyes, it did in his at that moment, and she saw it and gave a little, low-chunnering laugh of happiness.

The next night she looked at his wrist when he arrived, and smiled, well pleased to see her piece of string around it. When her father

had left them he reproached her for having on a dinner-dress instead of the gown, and she laughed.

"You dear, stupid man," she replied to his complaint. "I can't go on wearing that shabby old gown for ever, you know. Why don't you like this frock? Isn't it pretty?"

"It's pretty enough—too pretty," said Mr. Bessinger. "It frightens me. I daren't think of holding you in my arms when you are wearing that. I love the gown, and it does not awe me, and, Nancy, my arms are just aching to hold you, dear."

She laughed. "Then I had better never wear the gown again," she said.

She kept to her word in spite of his protests, and even on their last evening she wore one of the dresses which held him at arm's length, timid at its fastidious daintiness. She had spent every evening in restraining him, in fencing with him, her only anxiety being to keep him in her control. She was intensely happy in his adoration, his love of her, but she desired that they should continue on just the happy terms they were. Mr. Bessinger had other intentions.

After her father had gone the man turned to her and, taking both her hands in his, looked into her eyes and asked:—

"Nancy, when will you marry me?"

"Never," she laughed.

"I am not joking, dear," he said. "It's just the biggest thing in my life—my love of you, and I can't go on without you. I knew directly I saw you at the hotel that no other woman could ever come into my world but you. I've told you how I felt dozens of times. And now I want you. Tell me, when will you marry me?"

Mrs. Williamson paled slightly, and a timidity which he had never seen before came into her eyes.

"Why can't you let things be? Aren't you happy as we are? *I* am, and I don't want things changed," she replied.

"I might have been content a few weeks back," he answered, "but not now; not now. My love has grown with the days, Nancy, until it has absorbed into itself or else blotted out all other desires and interests. It is clamouring for you, and will not be denied. Why should you hesitate?"

"I will never marry anybody again," she said, slowly and seriously. "I've had my lesson, and will never run the risk any more. *He* thought he loved me, and I thought so too when we married, but I soon realized how poor a thing his love was, and I know too much to tie myself again."

"Don't you trust me, child? Don't you believe in my love? Don't you understand that out of such love as mine nothing but happiness can come near you?"

"I like you better than any man I have ever met," she said, her eyes fixed on his as if pleading for his forbearance. "And I trust you utterly, and believe in you as I never thought to believe in any man again. I tell you frankly that when we met that day our car broke down I thought you meant flirtation, and I rejoiced because I felt sure you would be delightful to flirt with, and I never realized you were serious till it was too late."

"Yes, it's too late now for flirtation," he said, hope shining in his eyes because of her words. "It is the real thing, dear, the highest and best the world can give us—just love. Now tell me—when will you marry me?"

"Never, never, never," she said, earnestly.

He stared at her incredulously. He was prepared to reason her out of a certain amount of hesitation, but he recognized finality in her voice and look. So they stood, he with his hands on her shoulders, she holding his elbows, looking into each other's eyes. Then she felt his hands slowly relaxing their hold on her shoulders, before they fell helplessly to his sides.

"Is that your last word?" he asked, in amazement.

She sought to get away from the stress of the situation, and affected to treat the matter lightly. She forced herself to smile as she answered:—

"The very last. You're not to be silly any more. We are just going right back to the happiness you have been trying to spoil all the evening, and I'm going up to change into that horrid old gown you like, and when I come down again you will have made up your mind." She leant forward and touched his lips lightly with her own, and went from the room.

When she came down again it was to find an empty room, but on the mantelpiece lay a little bit of coloured string.

She flew to the front door and looked into the garden, but his bicycle was gone, so she came back into the drawing-room and sat there with an ache in her heart which brought tears into her eyes over and over again. In the morning she sent her lover a note imploring him to come and see her, but the gardener brought the note back with the news that Mr. Bessinger had left his lodgings that morning and had gone to London. She was

deeply hurt, and her pride made her resentful. In the smart of her own wound she ignored the pain he was enduring and failed to perceive that what he had done was but a proof of the depth of his passion for herself. She tore up her note, and instead wrote on a sheet of paper, "You might have spared me this!" and, enclosing the piece of string he had left the night before, posted it to his lodgings with the usual request for its being forwarded.

III.

A WHOLE year passed after the second chapter of Mr. Bessinger's love-story had closed. He had spent it in assiduous attention to his work, relieved by more or less violent exercise as an anodyne to his wound, which had been a grievous one. In spite of all his efforts, however, remembrances would intrude themselves upon him, and he could not drive the image of the woman he had loved with all the depths of his nature from his dreams.

Mrs. Williamson had spent the year in restless ill-ease. It was only when her lover had passed with such suddenness and finality from her life that she realized how much his presence had meant to her daily scheme of existence. At the opening of the third chapter of the story she was living in a river-side house, and with her was staying a most intimate friend, one who had taken up nursing as a profession, and who was enjoying a well-earned holiday. She was younger than Mrs. Williamson, extraordinarily pretty, and an arrant flirt.

She was lounging in a deck-chair on the lawn, which extended to the bank of the river, talking to the gardener, in the absence of her hostess, who had gone to London for the day, when a boatload of young men passed down midstream, singing, laughing, and evidently enjoying themselves in their own peculiar way. She and the gardener watched them.

Even as they looked, two of those in the boat stood up to change their seats. The boat rocked, there was an outburst of laughter and ejaculations, and then the occupants were all in the water. All succeeded in getting back to the boat except one, who dropped behind struggling and crying for help. Coming up stream was an oarsman sculling himself in a racing outrigger. He rowed with rapid strokes to the drowning man and tumbled clumsily into the water to his help. By this time the other was terror-stricken, and when the rescuer came within reach he clutched him with a choking embrace, and a violent struggle ensued. Miss Devine realized the urgency of the case, and said:—

"Quick, Brown, the boat!"

The gardener was at the painter of Mrs. Williamson's skiff in a few seconds, and, casting off, rowed rapidly to the two men. Meanwhile the young man's companions, wet and without oars, were drifting steadily down stream, followed by the racing boat.

Miss Devine watched the pair, expecting them to sink for good and all every second; and it was with the utmost relief that she saw the gardener reach them. With exceeding difficulty the man who had caused all the trouble was got aboard, and then she beheld the struggles made by the rescuer to do the same. The gardener did his best to assist, the other in the boat being apparently beyond giving any help to rescue in turn the man who had saved him, and eventually Miss Devine saw the gardener settle to the sculls and row towards her, the third man clinging to the stern. The boat had drifted a considerable way down stream, and travelled slowly against the current, but at last it reached the bank. The young man, looking very miserable and very sober, got out, and Miss Devine tied the boat's painter to its ring, the while the gardener dragged the third man to shore.

"He's just about done, miss," he said. "He'll want a drop of brandy."

"We must get him to the house," she answered. "I can help."

They carried him between them to the house and, unmindful of carpets, up the stairs to a bedroom. Miss Devine was in her element here. She knew exactly what to do, and by the time the doctor had arrived everything which could be done had been done.

So it was that when Mrs. Williamson arrived from London she was met by a somewhat excited Miss Devine.

"My dear, such an adventure, and you've got another visitor—a man this time!"

Then she proceeded to relate all that happened.

"But who is he? Is he a gentleman, or the other sort?" queried Mrs. Williamson.

"Oh, a gentleman obviously, but who he is or what he is it's impossible to say. He only had his boating clothes on—a vest, a pair of shorts, and a pair of shoes—and there's nothing to identify him by except a very dirty-looking little bit of string tied round his wrist."

Mrs. Williamson's heart gave a sudden bound, but she kept silent for several seconds before she asked:—

"What sort of string, and what's it for?"

"HE CLUTCHED HIM WITH A CHOKING EMBRACE, AND A VIOLENT STRUGGLE ENSUED."

"The string may have been quite pretty in its happier days. It's a bit of one of those fancy twines, but it's old and wet at present; as to what it's for, I'm as wise as you are, my dear. Perhaps he's a Mussulman, and it's a charm. Would you like to come and see him? He's quite unconscious."

"No, I don't think so, thanks, dear. I don't like seeing horrors, and I should dream of drowning men all night if I saw him."

Mrs. Williamson was very silent after dinner that night, but she suddenly broke a long spell of silence in a way which showed plainly where her thoughts had been.

"Bell, dear, don't tell your drowned man whose house he's in or anything about me."

"Why?" demanded Miss Devine, in all astonishment, and with the bluntness of a great friend.

"Just a fancy of mine," was the response. "Let him think you are his hostess, and don't mention me."

"You *are* funny," was Miss Devine's comment.

Mrs. Williamson spent the next morning in one long fit of restlessness. She grew angrily impatient at the delay her friend made in returning from the sick man's room. She felt she *must* know if it were really her lover or no.

At last Miss Devine's heliotrope frock made its appearance from the drawing-room window, and her friend walked to meet her.

"Well?" she asked.

"He's much better. Ever so much better; awake and quite conscious."

"Yes, but *who* is he?"

"You seem to think his identity more interesting than his welfare, my dear!" laughed Miss Devine.

"Who is he?" repeated Mrs. Williamson.

"I can satisfy you absolutely. He's a Mr. Bessinger, and his clothes are at Borton's boathouse at Redbridge, and he'd rather like to have them sent for, also a wire or two sent. He remarked that he could not very well go home in a vest, a pair of shorts, a pair of shoes, and nothing else, so I reminded him of the piece of string, and you should have seen how interested he became. He wanted to know where the string was, and added that he was afraid he had lost it in the river. I told him that I had removed it for the good of his health, as wet string was not supposed to be the best thing in the world for half-drowned men. He was as keen as anything on getting it back, so I began to chaff him about it, but he was so anxious for it that I had to give it him. He's got a romantic attachment evidently, and so I am going to try and get up a flirtation with him."

"You won't have long to do it, if he's sent for his clothes and is well," said Mrs. Williamson.

"We haven't heard what the doctor says yet, my dear. Patients sometimes feel all right and then go back. He had a pretty good dose of it yesterday, I can tell you."

Miss Devine's warning was justified by results. When the doctor arrived the patient's temperature was up, and his hostess was informed that he was unlikely to leave his bed for a week at least.

During the week which followed he progressed steadily if slowly, the attacks of fever growing less frequent and less severe, but the man naturally became weaker. Miss Devine, who did the day nursing, did her utmost to lead her patient into a flirtation, but with no success, a result which only encouraged her to fresh efforts.

On an evening at the end of the week the two friends were sitting reading after dinner. At least the younger was immersed in a novel, while her hostess held a book in front of her and turned no page for over half an hour.

"Bell, I wish you'd ask him why he wears that bit of string," she said, suddenly.

"Who's he? Oh, you're thinking of *him*. You *are* curious about him! Why don't you see him and ask him yourself?"

"I don't want to," said Mrs. Williamson, "but I wish you would."

"He wears it because he's in love, my dear. He's got the complaint badly."

"How do you know? Has he told you so?"

"He's hardly the sort of man to talk about it," laughed Miss Devine.

"Then how do you know?" persisted her friend.

"I know," answered Miss Devine.

"I wish you'd ask him why he wears that string."

"All right, I will if I can remember it," responded Miss Devine, lightly, and turned her eyes back to her book.

Mrs. Williamson frowned, as if annoyed, and raised her book as if to read, but her thoughts were back in the previous year.

The next day, after Miss Devine had visited the sick room, she came to give her news of their visitor. Her hostess listened, and, at the end, asked:—

"Did you ask him why he wore the piece of string?"

"I didn't ask him *why* he did, exactly. I asked him what it was," she answered.

"What did he say?" asked her listener.

"'My foolishness,' was what he said."

Mrs. Williamson bit her lip.

"He'll be up to-morrow, and then you can see him for yourself," went on the girl.

"Oh," was the only rejoinder. She had been living in the past and hardly comprehended the present. She had never contemplated the future, and was now faced by the necessity of making her plans. Should she go away, she asked herself, and let him go his way in ignorance of her presence? Her pride and her desire were in combat as to what she should do. Miss Devine went back to the sick room.

That evening Mrs. Williamson announced

that she thought she should go to London the next morning, and illumination came to Miss Devine. She took herself to task for being such an idiot as not to perceive the facts before. Her new theory explained everything. It was her friend who had given the man the piece of string, and there had been misunderstanding. She was one of those sensible women who enjoy straightening out a muddle, and she thought quickly.

"Don't go to-morrow, wait till the day after," she said, "then I can go with you. I've got scores of things I want to do in town. Mr. Bessinger will get up after lunch to-morrow and go off, and then I shall be free with a clear conscience."

"I thought he'd be getting up in the morning," said her friend, in all innocence.

"Oh, dear, no," lied the other.

The next day broke in brilliant sunshine, and after breakfast Mrs. Williamson, who had passed a sleepless night and felt languid, took a book out into the garden and sat in a hammock-chair facing the river. Miss Devine went to see Mr. Bessinger.

"Now you've got to get up," she ordered. "If you'll tell me which of these immaculate clothes you propose to wear, I'll put them out for you."

"You're too good to me," he said.

"Much more so than you realize," she returned. "By and by you'll be much more grateful."

"I don't think so," he answered, with sincerity.

"We'll see," she laughed back.

"I'll ring for your hot water," she said, and, having done so, turned and looked out of the window. What she saw gave her her plan of campaign. "I'm going to change my frock while you make yourself beautiful, and then I'm going out into the garden to sit by the river. When you're dressed will you join me there? You can't miss the way; you'll see the open door in front of you as you come down the stairs."

"All right. I'm longing to be up and out," he said, with an exhilaration quite youthful. "I'm sick of being kept in."

She left him.

He came down the stairs feeling strangely weak in the legs, and paused in the hall to steady himself before going into the garden. Then he walked across the lawn to where he saw the skirt of his hostess spreading out to one side of her chair. His feet made no sound on the grass, and he did not speak until he was within a yard of her.

"You were quicker than I," he said.

The effect was electrical. Mrs. Williamson started up from her chair and turned on him, her heart beating tumultuously. Her eyes were almost terror-stricken.

He was quite as amazed, and they stood looking at each other without speaking. She noticed that he was thin, that his hair was a trifle greyer at the temples than it had been, and a sudden pity crept into her love for the man.

"Are you better?" she asked, at length.

"What does it mean? Why are you here?" he asked.

She gave a little hysterical laugh.

"Didn't you know? Why did you come to me, then?" She gave him question for question.

"I thought you were Miss Devine."

The woman in her asserted itself.

"Ah, you are disappointed? I'll go and send her to you."

But she made no attempt at going.

"I don't understand," he said, frowning in his efforts to solve this amazing riddle. "Nancy, I can't guess what this means, much less understand it, but I understand one thing, and you understand that too. It is that I love you, more than love you. You can measure the depth of my love for you, perhaps; I myself can't. But it is yours. I thought I had some pride, but my hunger for you has killed it. The sight of you has driven away all other considerations. My love is yours, dear heart. What are you going to do with it? Are you going to take it, or cast it from you?"

"But I have taken it from you, haven't I?" she asked.

She stretched out her hand and took his, then ran the other hand up his wrist, and felt the bit of string.

"You have worn it all these months, Humphrey?" she asked.

"You know it," he replied.

He glanced back towards the house, which was almost hidden by the trees. The windows looked sleepy and innocent. He put an arm round and drew her close to him, and his senses swam as the scent of her stirred the old memories. She suffered him gladly, thankfully.

"Why did you go away?" she asked him.

"Because you told me you would never marry me when I asked you to."

"Ask me again," she whispered, dreamily, and very tenderly.

He asked her.

THE RUSTY POT AND THE WOODEN BALLS.

A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

Illustrated by W. Heath Robinson.

THERE lived once in a village a poor sexton. It was with difficulty that he earned a living, but his wife kept a number of hens, and by selling the eggs in the neighbouring town they managed to keep body and soul together. But one day a dire misfortune befell them. The hens began to die rapidly one after another, till at last there remained only one, which they were obliged to sell.

On the next market-day, therefore, the sexton's wife set out for the town. She carried on her back a basket, in which she had placed the precious hen, and as the road lay over a mountain she was obliged to sit down occasionally in order to rest herself. While seated thus, there suddenly appeared before her a dwarf, whose long white beard fell almost to the ground.

"Where are you going?" asked the strange little man.

The poor woman was terrified, but managed to stammer out a reply.

"I am going to market," she said, "to sell my last hen."

"Give me your hen," said the dwarf, "and I will give you a pot in return for it."

The bargain seemed such a poor one that the woman forgot her fright and burst out laughing.

"That would be a poor exchange," she said. "Do you think I do not know the value of a pot?"

"Be not so sure," replied the dwarf, "that your hen is worth more than my pot. But if the bargain does not please you, I will not force you to it."

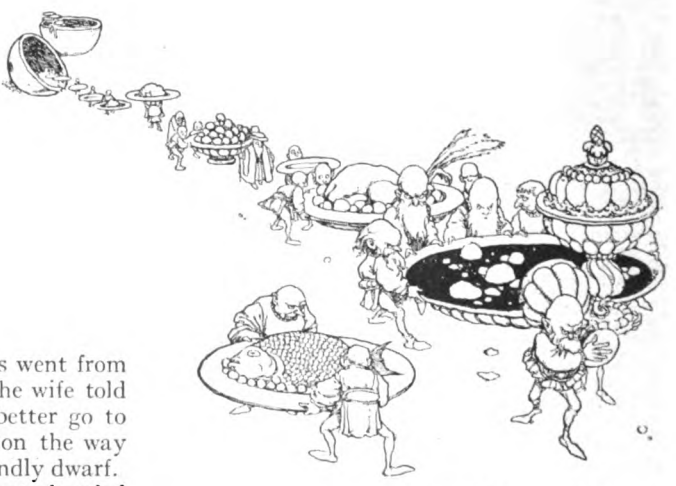
The woman began to wonder whether the offer, after all, might not be a fair one, and after some consideration she agreed to accept. The dwarf at once vanished, but in a few moments returned with a black and rusty pot in his hand.

"So long as you have this pot," he said, "you will never want. You have but to place it in the shade, cover it, and say, 'Pot, fill thyself!' and the pot will obey your behest. But be careful never to clean it, and do not let the sun shine upon it."

The woman promised to follow these instructions, took the pot, and returned. Naturally, she was anxious to find out if her new possession really had the magic properties which the dwarf had described, and at the first opportunity she placed it in the shade and covered it with a cloth. Then she cried, "Pot, fill thyself with milk!" On the cloth being removed, lo and behold! the pot was full to the brim with milk! Overjoyed, she ran to her husband and told him of the good fortune that had come to them.

For a long time the pot remained in use, and never failed to yield good service. But the more it was used, the blacker it became, and the woman, like a good housewife, itched to clean it. One day she noticed that it had become blacker than ever, and, forgetting the dwarf's instructions, she set to and began to clean it. She rubbed and polished and polished and rubbed until the black had all been removed, and when she set the pot down in the sun, it shone like pure gold. The sight delighted her, but when she stretched out her hand to pick the splendid object up, she received so violent a blow that she fell down in a swoon. When she came to herself the pot had vanished.

Loud were the lamentations over the loss of the precious object, for in place of plenty



there was now want. Things went from bad to worse, till at length the wife told her husband that he had better go to the town in the hope that on the way he might fall in with the friendly dwarf.

That he might not go empty-handed the sexton borrowed some money and bought a lamb, which he took with him to the town. Arrived at the spot upon the mountain-side where his wife had had the strange encounter, he sat down to rest. He waited long, but no one came. As he rose to continue his journey, however, he heard a movement in the bushes beside the road, and on turning his head he saw the little man with the long white beard standing beside him.

"Where do you go?" asked the dwarf.

The sexton was seized with a tremor at finding his hopes, which a moment ago he had abandoned, so suddenly realized.

"I am driving this lamb to the market," he said.

"Your trouble is for nothing," said the dwarf. "Amidst all the sheep with which the market is crowded, who will notice your one small lamb? Give it to me, and I will give you a ball in exchange."

"Of what use is that to me?" said the sexton. "With the money which I shall obtain for my lamb I can buy as many balls as I want."

"Be not so sure," replied the dwarf, "that you can acquire such a ball as mine. But if you do not wish to make the exchange, I do not desire your lamb."

At this the sexton, remembering the pot, agreed to the bargain, and the dwarf departed. When he returned he brought with him a ball which seemed to be made of wood.

"When you would use this ball," said the dwarf, "lay it on the ground, and say, 'Ball, doff thy cap!' But on no account leave any door or window open when you do this."

The sexton received the ball, but found it was so heavy that he could scarcely hold it. Slinging it in a handkerchief he returned home in haste, eager to make trial of his acquisition. Arrived at his house, the sexton closed all windows and doors, laid the ball upon the ground, and cried, "Ball, doff thy cap!" At once the ball began to move, rolling hither and thither about the floor with ever-increasing speed. Faster and faster and faster it travelled, until, suddenly, it split in two, when from either portion there leapt forth a number of little men bearing golden dishes containing good food. These they set upon the table, and at once vanished into the ball again.

With great delight the sexton and his wife sat down to such a meal as they had not enjoyed since the loss of the magic pot.

No sooner had they finished than the ball again divided and the same little company of dwarfs emerged. They removed all the dishes from the table and bore them into the ball, which closed of its own accord as soon as the last had entered.

For a long time the sexton and his wife remained in possession of the ball, for, needless to say, they were careful not to repeat the mistake of disobeying the instructions they had received with it. But gradually news leaked out in the village of what a wonderful treasure the happy pair possessed, and the tale came to the ears of the abbot of the monastery. The latter sent at once for the sexton, and inquired if the story was true. The sexton was loath to admit it, but, under the threat of losing his employment, he confessed the whole story. In obedience to the abbot's orders he brought the ball to the monastery, where he was obliged to leave it, being promised in return a more profitable employment than he had hitherto enjoyed.

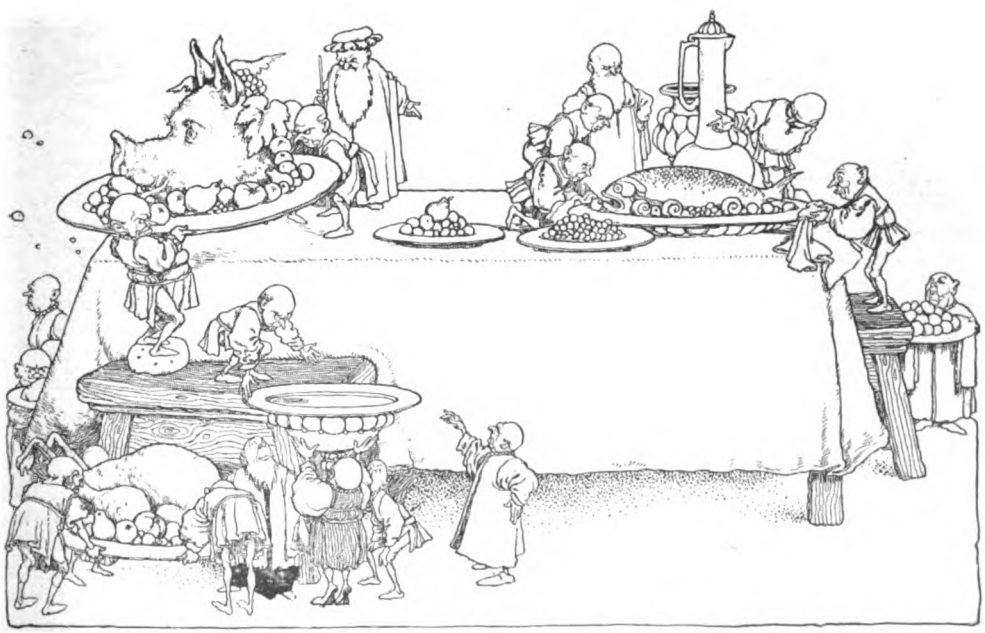
But the poor sexton waited so long without receiving the promised recompense that he determined to try his luck once more in the mountains. He therefore bought two oxen and drove them before him along the road to the town. Once more he rested at the same spot, and this time he had scarcely sat down when the dwarf stood before him.

"Well, have you come for another ball?" asked the little man.

"Yes," said the sexton; "and as I wish for a better ball this time, I have brought two oxen."

"Wait a moment," said the dwarf, and vanished.

In due course he reappeared, bearing in his arms a larger ball than the former one. This he gave into the sexton's charge, saying, "You know what you have to do."



"SUDDENLY THE BALL SPLIT IN TWO, WHEN FROM EITHER PORTION THERE LEAPT FORTH A NUMBER OF LITTLE MEN BEARING GOLDEN DISHES CONTAINING GOOD FOOD."

Gratified by his success, the sexton returned home and proceeded to make trial of the larger ball. He closed the doors and windows, placed it on the ground, and cried, "Ball, doff thy cap!" Like its predecessor, the ball began to roll about, attaining even greater speed than the small one. Presently it divided just as before, but instead of a troop of dwarfs there came out two giants armed with huge cudgels, who laid about them so vigorously that before long the sexton lay swooning on the ground. Only then did the giants re-enter the ball.

The sexton now saw a way to obtain revenge upon the cheating abbot. He presented himself at the monastery with the new ball, and asked for an audience of the abbot. This was refused, because the abbot was entertaining a large party of guests. The sexton persisted in his request, however, and sent in word that he had now a much larger and better ball to display. This cunning message had the desired effect, for without more ado he was ushered into the great hall, where the abbot and his guests were dining.

The sexton was bidden to show what the ball could do for the amusement of the company. Nothing loath, he set his burden down, and cried, "Ball, doff thy cap!"

At once the ball split open, and before the unhappy guests could defend themselves, the two giants emerged and laid about them with their clubs, not ceasing until everybody in the hall was black and blue with bruises.

In an agony of fear the abbot cried out to the sexton to call his dreadful myrmidons off, but the sexton replied that it was useless to bid them stop until the hiding-place of the stolen ball was disclosed.

"Yonder in the chest!" cried the abbot, diving under the table in a vain endeavour to escape a blow from one of the monstrous clubs.

"Give me the key," demanded the sexton.

Screaming with terror, the abbot dragged the key from his pocket and threw it across the room. The sexton caught it, unlocked the chest, and took out the precious ball of which he had been so long deprived. As soon as he was in possession of it, the giants retired into their own ball, which at once closed up.

Carrying the small ball under his arm, and trundling the large one in front of him, the sexton returned home gaily. His wife was rejoiced to learn of the good fortune which he had gained, for now, lacking nothing, they were able to settle down to a quiet and peaceful old age.

But it is the habit of men to grow careless,

"THERE CAME OUT TWO GIANTS ARMED WITH HUGE CUDGELS, WHO LAID ABOUT THEM VIGOROUSLY."

and there came a day when the sexton, desiring to exhibit the miraculous properties of his treasured ball to a company of friends, commanded it to doff its cap without first taking the precaution of seeing that all means of egress from the room were closed. The door was ajar, and no sooner had the ball begun to roll about the floor, than it made across the room, burst through the door, and flew out of the house into the open air. It was followed by the larger ball, which bounded away not less swiftly.

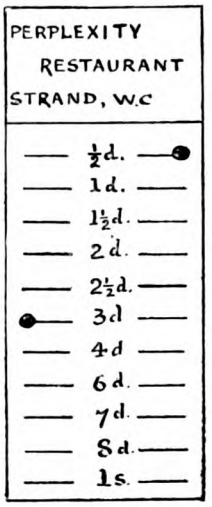
Behind the truant objects ran the sexton, his wife, and his friends in a vain hue and cry. The balls flew ever faster and faster, until of a sudden the smaller one split open. From out of it rushed the troop of dwarfs, carrying with them a great treasure of golden objects of various kinds, with which they fled hastily into the mountains.

A moment later, the larger ball split open also, and the pursuers stopped aghast at the sight of the host of giants which leaped forth from it. For one fearful instant the sexton and his friends expected to be killed, but the giants, after wildly brandishing their clubs, followed the example of the dwarfs and fled pell-mell to the mountains.

The magic balls, like the magic pot, had vanished for ever.

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.



326.—THE RESTAURANT CHECK.

I GIVE an example of the check employed at certain popular restaurants. The waitress punches holes in the ticket to indicate the amount of purchase. Thus, in our example, the two holes clearly indicate that the customer has to pay 3½d. But the girl might, if she had chosen, have punched in any one of three other ways—2½d. and 1d., or 2d. and 1½d., or 2d., 1d., and ½d. Now, on one occasion a waitress said to another, "I find I can punch my customer's ticket in any one of ten different ways, *and no more*." "Then," replied the other, "I can say exactly the same in the case of my customer." This was true. What were the amounts of the two purchases, which were different? Only one hole is allowed to be punched against the same amount.

327.—THE MISSING CODE WORD.

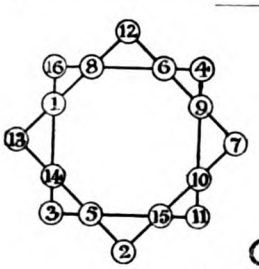
A DANGEROUS spy was arrested, and in his possession were found some important documents, but their real meaning was concealed under a very cunning cipher. Experts were set to work, and after much labour they arrived at the result that it only needed the discovery of a certain key word to enable them to decipher everything. They knew that it was an English word, and they were certain of the positions of five of the letters, as follows :—

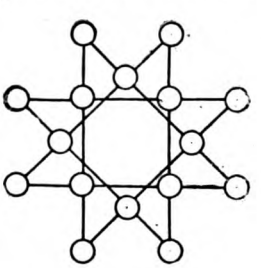
*A*E*I**OU*

What they wanted was to find six letters for the positions indicated by the asterisks to complete the word. Of course, if the OU could be moved back against the I, the word FACETIOUSLY would have "filled the bill," as Americans say; but they were certain of the positions of those five vowels, and, after going carefully through an English dictionary, they found the word. What was it?

328.—TWO EIGHT-POINTED STARS.

THE puzzles of stars with five, six, and seven points that I gave a few months ago seem to have

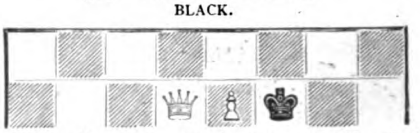




been found especially interesting by readers, and correspondents have asked me to deal with the case of the eight-pointed star. The star may be formed in two different ways, as shown in our illustration, and the first example is a solution. The numbers 1 to 16 are so placed that every straight line of four adds up 34. If you substitute for every number its difference from 17 you will get the complementary solution. Let the reader try to discover some of the other solutions, and he will find it a very hard nut, even with this one to help him. But I will present the puzzle in an easy and entertaining form. When you know how, every arrangement in the first star can be transferred to the second one automatically. Every line of four numbers in the one case will appear in the other, only the *order* of the numbers will have to be changed. Now, with this information given, it is not a difficult puzzle to find a solution for the second star.

329.—MATE IN THREE.

BLACK.



HERE is a little chess puzzle propounded by the late Sam Loyd in his early days. The material is so simple that it should appeal to the reader with the most elementary knowledge of chess. White has to play and checkmate Black in three moves. The White king is on his K2 square, but, as he clearly cannot come into the play owing to his being such a long way off, I omit him and leave out part of the board to save space.

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

322.—EXCHANGING THE KNIGHTS.

PLAY as follows: 37—31, 3—9; 33—27, 5—11; 27—37, 6—12; 31—16, 8—14; 38—32, 7—13; 32—15, 13—3; 36—30, 4—10; 40—23, 14—4; 37—31, 11—26; 34—28, 12—27; 35—29, 10—25; 28—22, 3—18; 39—24, 4—10; 29—14, 18—33; 23—8, 2—17; 24—7, 17—34; 16—6, 1—18; 15—5, 18—35; 30—13, 26—36; 31—16, 9—26; 13—3, 36—30; 22—32, 30—40; 32—15, 27—37; 6—12, 25—19; 16—6, 34—28; 6—16, 19—34; 12—2, 26—36; 16—6, 10—25; 14—4, 28—38; 5—11, 35—29; 11—1, 25—35; 15—5, 29—39. Thirty-two moves for each colour.

323.—DONKEY-RIDING.

THE complete mile was run in nine minutes. From the facts stated we cannot determine the time taken over the first and second quarter-miles separately, but together they of course took four and a half minutes. The last two quarters were run in two and a quarter minutes each.

324.—DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

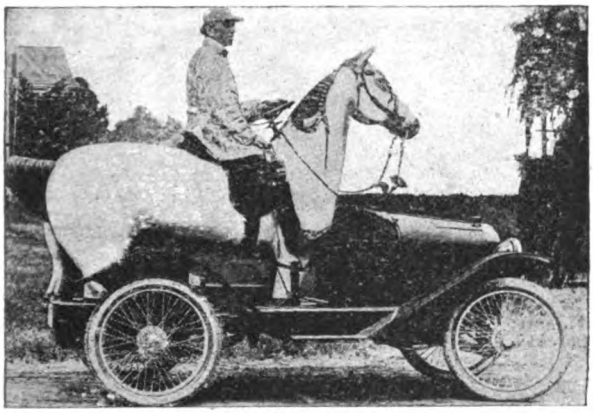
THE man bought 48lb. of beef at 2s. and the same quantity of sausages at 1s. 6d. a pound, thus spending £8 8s. Had he bought 42lb. of beef and 56lb. of sausages he would have spent £4 4s. on each and have obtained 98lb. instead of 96lb.—a gain of 2lb. in weight.

325.—A QUEER WORD.

NOWHERE—NOW HERE.

CURIOSITIES.

[We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.]



A QUEER CARLOAD.

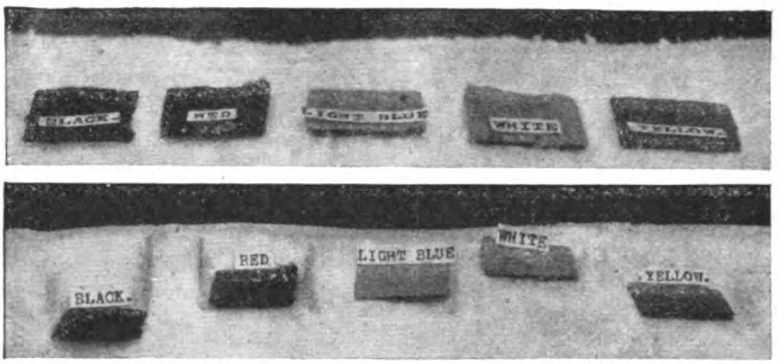
WHAT seems to be a jockey riding a thoroughbred horse is the queer carload that was seen recently in the streets of Boston. The device is one of the most remarkable thrillers ever used for advertising purposes. It consists of a life-size model of a racehorse set upon the chassis of a small pleasure car. The driver of the car rides in the saddle, and instead of stirrups he has pedals under his feet that work the foot-brake and clutch-lever. The steering apparatus extends through the neck of the horse, and the wheel is just in front of the saddle. The only advertising is the lettering on the jockey's blouse, which is of muslin, and is decorated with a dozen advertisements of a popular drink. When this amazing car was driven through the busy streets it caused quite a sensation, and blocked the traffic for a time.

CHESSMEN MADE FROM CARTRIDGES.

THIS unique set of chessmen is the work of Corporal H. Henshaw, of the Royal Naval Division — Signal Company — and was made, while on active service in the Dardanelles, entirely from British and French cartridges. The only tools available were a couple of small files, and the whole of his spare time for a month was occupied in making the set. One of his greatest difficulties was experienced in obtaining suitable colouring matter with which to distinguish the white men from the black, but, after much experimenting, he boiled them in the acid fixing salts used by photographers, with entirely satisfactory results, as the photograph shows. The manner in which the character of the various pieces is suggested is the more remarkable when the material from which they are made is borne in mind.

A CHURCH SPIRE THROUGH THE ROOF.

SOME little time ago a high wind carried away the spire of the old church in New Hartford, Conn., with very amazing results. The pointed steeple was turned upside down as it fell through the air, and, landing on the roof of the building, it partly penetrated its way through and remained so. The spire is half-buried in the roof, as the photograph reproduced above indicates, and the curiosity is so interesting that it was allowed to remain so. No stranger freak of the winds has been seen than this piercing of a church by its own steeple.—Mr. C. L. Edholm, 391, Central Park West, New York.



AN INGENIOUS TEST.

A VERY singular way of testing the heat-absorbing powers of certain coloured cloths is here shown. A number of small squares of cloth of the same material, but of different colours, are placed on the snow in bright sunshine. In an hour it will be found that the squares have sunk into the snow according to the amount of heat the various colours absorb. Thus the white does not sink at all, while the black goes down the lowest.—Mr. S. Leonard Bastin, 31, Castlemain Avenue, Bournemouth.

A GIANT PUMPKIN.

THIS enormous pumpkin, which must surely be a record-breaker for size, was grown at Orbast, South Gippsland, Victoria, by Mr. P. C. Nixon, and weighed 185lb. It is here seen on the Snowy River making quite a comfortable boat for three children aged seven years, five years, and four years, and a baby of eighteen months, who are fishing for bream.—Mr. Henry Pullen, Lenaine, Leopold Crescent, Surrey Hills, Victoria, Australia.

SEASHORE MILLINERY.

THE hats in the illustration below were made entirely from materials picked up on the seashore, with the addition of a little sealing wax. In some cases the hats were trimmed with seaweed and a small shell, in others a sea-bird's feather was used. The left-hand one on the top row has a crab's claw on it.—W. P. S., Edgbaston, Birmingham.

SOLUTION OF BRIDGE PROBLEM IN LAST MONTH'S ISSUE.

TRICK 1.—A leads the 6 of hearts; Y plays the queen; B wins with the ace.

TRICK 2.—B leads the 4 of hearts; Y wins with the king.

TRICK 3.—Y leads the queen of diamonds; B wins with the ace.

TRICK 4.—B leads the knave of hearts; Z (cannot unguard either clubs or spades, and therefore) discards the 8 of diamonds; A discards the 6 of clubs.

TRICK 5.—B leads the queen of spades, which wins.

TRICK 6.—B leads the 8 of spades, won by Z with the 10.

And the last two tricks must be taken by A.

A REMINDER!

DO not forget that THE STRAND MAGAZINE *may now be sent* POST FREE *to British soldiers and sailors at home or abroad. All you need do is to hand your copies, without wrapper or address, over the counter at any post-office in the United Kingdom, and they will be sent by the authorities wherever they will be most welcome.*

GRAND CHRISTMAS DOUBLE NUMBER

The Popular Gifts of the Season

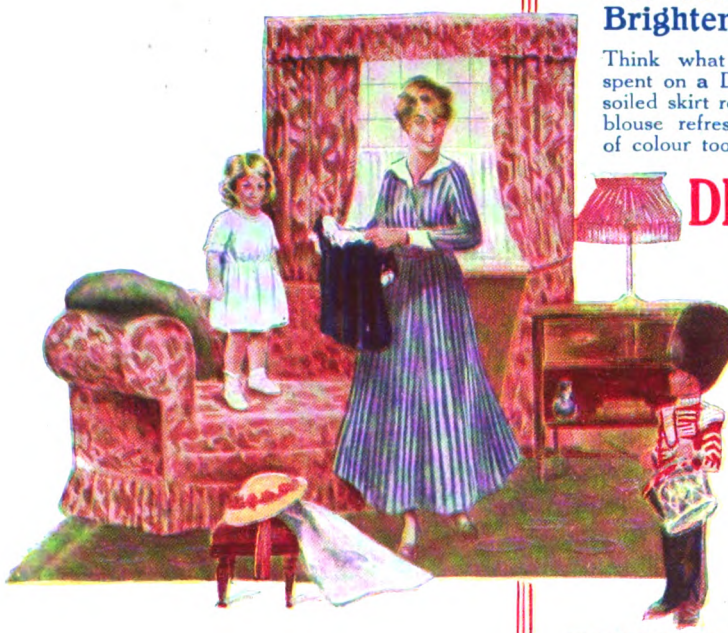
You will surely give real pleasure in presenting to your friends, both ladies and men, Gift Boxes of the fleecy, fine-quality, British-made "Jason" Hosiery. Men away on Service can make these gifts to any lady at home by writing an order to any draper or outfitter.

Appreciable Gifts for Ladies.
Plain, ribbed, and tastefully designed styles in Black, Navy, Nigger Brown, Khaki, Champagne, Lovat, and Steel Grey, in the "Elite" and "De Luxe" ranges, at 4/- and 5/- per box of two pairs.

Gifts for Naval and Military Officers and Civilians.
Boxes of Khaki, Navy, Steel Grey, and Black Half-Hose in heavy, medium, and light weights; plain, ribbed, and tastefully designed in the "Superb," "Elite," and "De Luxe" ranges, at 3/6, 4/-, and 5/- per box of two pairs.

See the "Jason" Tab on every pair. If any difficulty write to

THE JASON HOSIERY CO., LEICESTER.



Let the Drummer Brighten your home.

Think what a copper or two spent on a Drummer means. A soiled skirt renewed, or a stained blouse refreshed—and a change of colour too!

DRUMMER DYES

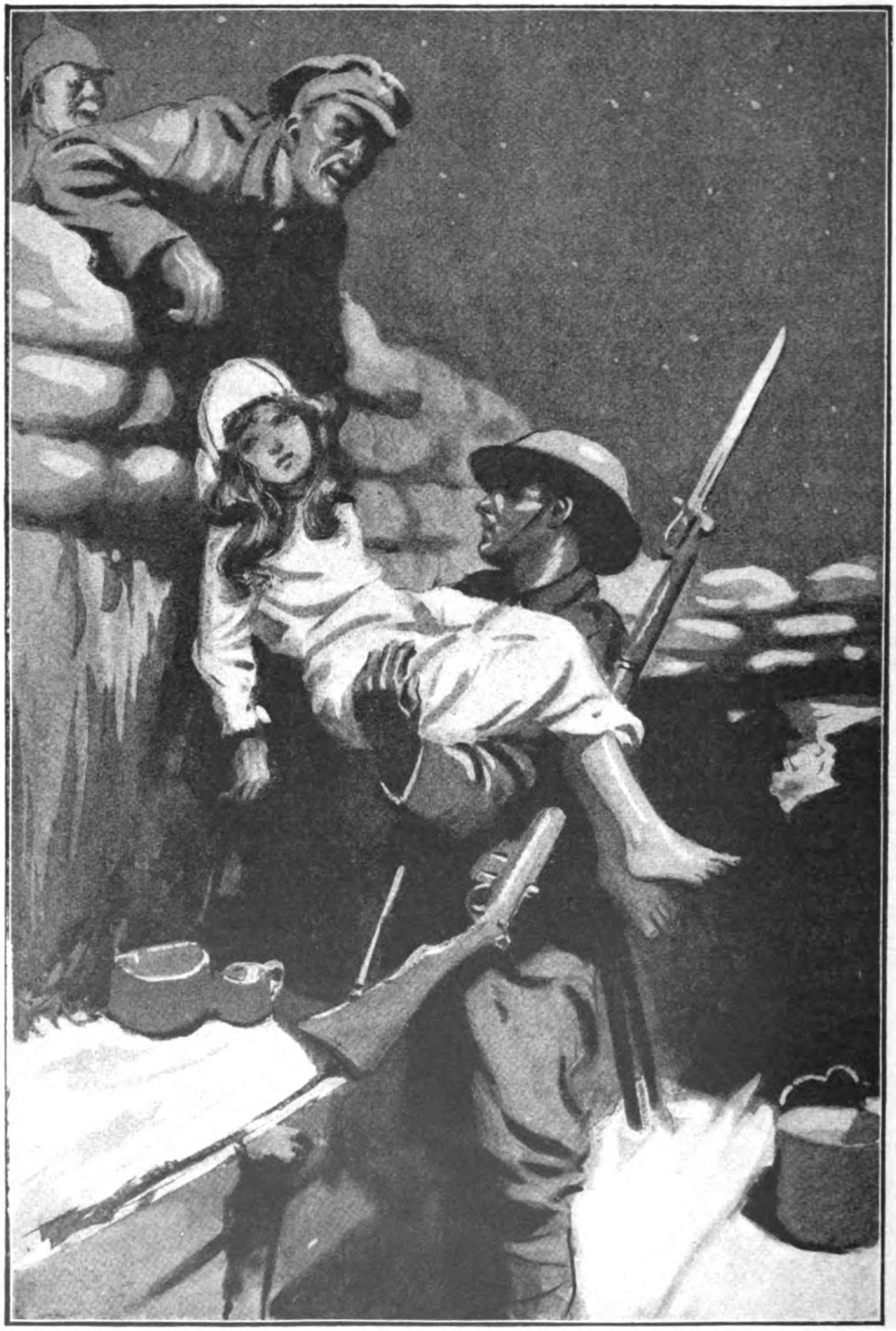
'So Easy to Use.'

Drummer Dyes can be had in all useful and fashionable colours——for

Window Curtains
Table Covers
Frocks Blouses
Pinafores
Cushion Covers
etc. etc.

Write now for useful Booklet.

EDGE'S, Bolton, Lancs.



"'I GOT A MASCOT, AND A BLAME SIGHT BETTER MASCOT THAN ANY OLD GOAT,' SAID TALIAFERRO."

(*See page* 589.)

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

Vol. 52. DECEMBER, 1916 No. 312

Madderson's Mascot.

By

EDGAR JEPSON.

Illustrated by Fred Leist.

PRIVATE TALIAFERRO P. MADDERSON, an American citizen, of Oakflat, West Virginia, was in a bad temper. At no time during the twenty-five years of his strenuous life had he been a yearner for popularity; but to be in ill-odour with the whole of the 52nd Battalion of Canadian Light Infantry was a little too much for even his four-square soul. He was, too, keenly alive to the injustice of their attitude to him. He had never for a moment intended to kill the battalion mascot. For no reason in the world, save pure cussedness, the blamed goat had rushed at him sideways and butted him painfully. If one of its horns had not caught his hip-joint, he would have acted more slowly and with less vigour. As it was he had merely caught it by the horns and given it a shake. If its neck had been half as hard as its horns, it would never have broken like that, and it was not fair to blame him for it. The fact was that these Canadian goats lacked stamina, and he despised them. A billy from the Great North Mountain, now——

It is only fair to the battalion to say that the whole of it did not glower upon Private Taliaferro P. Madderson with equal sourness. The expression of those who had gloomily made a nutritious and appetizing meal off fresh roast mascot was not as sour as the expression of those who had not.

None the less, at the moment Private Taliaferro P. Madderson was disposed to consider his Canadian comrades poor fellows and of no account. As an American citizen he despised them. Plainly they were void of understanding in the matter of goats.

He was somewhat soothed when the sergeant instructed him to report to Captain Kirby at the Battalion headquarters, and Captain Kirby instructed him to examine the ground to the left of the trench, since the enemy had been so quiet lately that they could be up to no good, and he suspected them of driving a sap in that quarter. After all, it was something to be the best scout in the battalion.

He was not long making his preparations. With a burnt cork he mottled his uniform and smudged his evenly-tanned face. He filled his water-bottle and crammed his pockets with chocolate and biscuit in case he should not have learnt enough by dawn and have to lie out during the day. He made quite sure that the Colt automatic which Captain Kirby had lent him—since a rifle is awkward for a scout—was in working order, and disposed of the spare cartridges in a handy pocket. A cartridge-belt catches in things when you are crawling. Last of all he took a dozen yards of strong whipcord from his kit-bag. He had brought back prisoners from these expeditions before now.

The dusk was not deep when he slipped over the parapet, but he was merged in the landscape before he had crawled thirty yards into the wire entanglement.

Copyright, 1916, by Edgar Jepson.

Once free of it he crawled quickly, making but a faint rustling, though there was no great need for caution for another hundred and fifty yards. But on his last expedition, when barely eighty yards from the trench, he had spotted a more loudly-rustling enemy engaged in the same occupation as himself, and ambushed him from a shell-hole. Since he was on the outward trail he had not taken him prisoner. He could throw a knife harder and very nearly as straight as an accomplished Mexican. He had not found the enemy scout's cigars equal to good Havanas, but he had approved of them.

To-night was not a white night. He obtained no cigars, and he could not find the sap which Captain Kirby suspected. He crawled a full mile along the German trenches, at times lying still for as long as a quarter of an hour to learn what they were at, or to escape the notice of working parties. To his thinking there was now far too much moonlight. On his return journey he was held up for a long while by a scattered working party. Indeed, he was held up for far longer than he need have been, for he lingered on in the hope of laying hands on a worker with cigars on him.

The dawn found him on the edge of a small shell-torn coppice, about a hundred yards from the German trenches and three hundred from the British. A few days before, with noisy impartiality, both sides had shelled it on the chance of finding it occupied by the other. But neither had thought it worth occupying.

Taliaferro decided to make it his resting-place for the day, and moved noiselessly through it, seeking a place where he would be so hidden that he might sleep and smoke at his ease.

To his surprise he found it a cup-shaped hollow. Its wooded sides sloped down to a turfed glade twenty yards across, and in the middle of the glade were the shell-shattered ruins of a cottage.

There was now all the light he needed to find a hiding-place and more. It was an uncommonly likely place for enemy snipers, and it behoved him to go with wariness.

He started on a slanting course down the slope towards the cottage. The enemy doubtless believed it empty. It might make the very hiding-place he desired.

Not very far from the edge a faint gasp struck on his keen hunter's ears. It came from the left, a little higher up the slope. He had been making no noise at all, and he made none drawing his automatic. He could only see a fallen tree-trunk, about five feet away, covered with branches torn by shells from trees around it. Then he heard the faintest chattering of teeth.

He had nothing to fear from anyone as scared as that; and whoever it might be was not armed, or he would by now be dead, or at least wounded. He moved forward, drew aside the branches from the part of the trunk whence the sound of chattering teeth came, and looked into a pair of utterly scared, big, brown eyes set in the pale, haggard, dirty face of a little girl.

Taliaferro's blue eyes stared into the brown ones with utter amazement. The child whimpered faintly with the last terror. Unblackened, his gaunt, rough-hewn face was not attractive to children; blackened, it would terrify most, and a child already in such a plight!

"Aw, quit now," said Taliaferro, in as gentle a tone as he could command.

It had no effect; the child whimpered, her teeth chattered.

"Onglay! Onglay!" he whispered, urgently, and tapped his chest.

He fancied that her terror-strained face relaxed a little.

He had a happy idea. He drew a cake of chocolate from his pocket and held it out to her.

She could not open her eyes wider; terror had already opened them to their widest. But her lips worked painfully, she shot out a grimy little claw-like hand, snatched the chocolate from his fingers, and snapped-to her teeth in it.

Private Taliaferro P. Madderson was not greatly given to sympathizing with fellow-creatures in distress; but he watched the working, wolfish little face as the child devoured the chocolate, with extraordinary distress.

When she had wolfed it down she held out her hand and asked for more. He did not understand her words, but he knew that she asked for more. He shook his head; he was sure that, for a starving child, she had had enough for the present. But he perceived that her lips were bluish and cracked, unscrewed the top, and gave her his water-bottle. She gulped the water down noisily.

He took the bottle from her firmly when he thought that she had had enough. She dropped back, closed her eyes, and two tears of relief at the soothing of the pangs she had been suffering oozed slowly from under

her eyelids and spread among the black eyelashes.

The tears made Taliaferro uncomfortable. He was so near to them. Clumsily he patted the grimy little hand. The child opened her eyes and tried to smile. He knew that she tried to smile. Then, almost on the instant, she was asleep.

He had full leisure to consider the situation. The child was hiding from German snipers, not from shells. The coppice had not been shelled at all for three or four days. Those snipers were in the coppice now. They would, of course, come and go in the darkness.

He had no doubt about the part of the coppice they were in. They were on his right in the half-circle which faced the British lines. He would look into the matter, but he would by no means take the risks that he would have taken in ordinary circumstances. He was resolved to get the child away to safety.

In that tangled welter of broken trees and torn branches it was impossible to move quickly, but it was possible to keep under perfect cover. He bored a way through it, under it, to the edge of the coppice, and began to work round it at a distance of five yards from that edge. He had gone about eighty yards in some thirty-five minutes when a sound fell on his ears. It was a gentle snore.

It was a satisfactory sound, though it filled him with contempt for the snorer; any real exponent of woodcraft would have broken himself of snoring in the early stages of acquiring the habit of the woods. It would have been more satisfactory had there been two snorers instead of one. Probably one sniper slept while another watched. At any rate, he would look into the matter.

He crawled towards the sound, which came from a spot about thirty yards away. The nearer he came to it the louder it grew and the quicker he could move. It would drown any faint rustling. Ten minutes later he peered through a thick screen of fallen branches into the sniper's lair.

It was an ideal lair. There was a clear view of the British trenches down a twenty-yards vista of shell-lopped tree-trunks running sideways to the edge of the coppice. No one in the trenches could tell the spot from which the bullet came; the faint smoke would be dispersed before it reached the top of the trunks; the report would be fairly muffled. A man could work in it for days without being spotted and receiving the attention of a battery. Taliaferro was charmed by it; he was even more charmed to see that it held only one sniper.

It held only one sniper, a stout, brightly red-headed man rolled in a blanket. Only one helmet and one rifle lay beside him; only one pack lay a few feet from him. It was of no importance that six bottles lay in a row beside the pack; six bottles might very well go with one man.

Taliaferro wormed his way with lithe briskness through the screen of branches. Then he leapt lightly, but landed heavily with his knees on the sleeper's ribs, expelling the breath from his body in a loud grunt.

Taliaferro sat quietly on him while he squirmed and gasped to get it back. Then he turned him round and held his shining knife before his dilated eyes while he pressed his large hand on his mouth to prevent any shouting. When he saw from his prisoner's terrified expression, from as much of it, that is, as his large hand permitted him to see, that he had quite grasped his awkward plight, he removed that large hand.

"Mercy, Kamarad!" gasped the sniper; and his mild blue eyes stood well out of his head.

"Durned if you ain't the very spit of my ol' Uncle Erasmus!" murmured Taliaferro, in some astonishment.

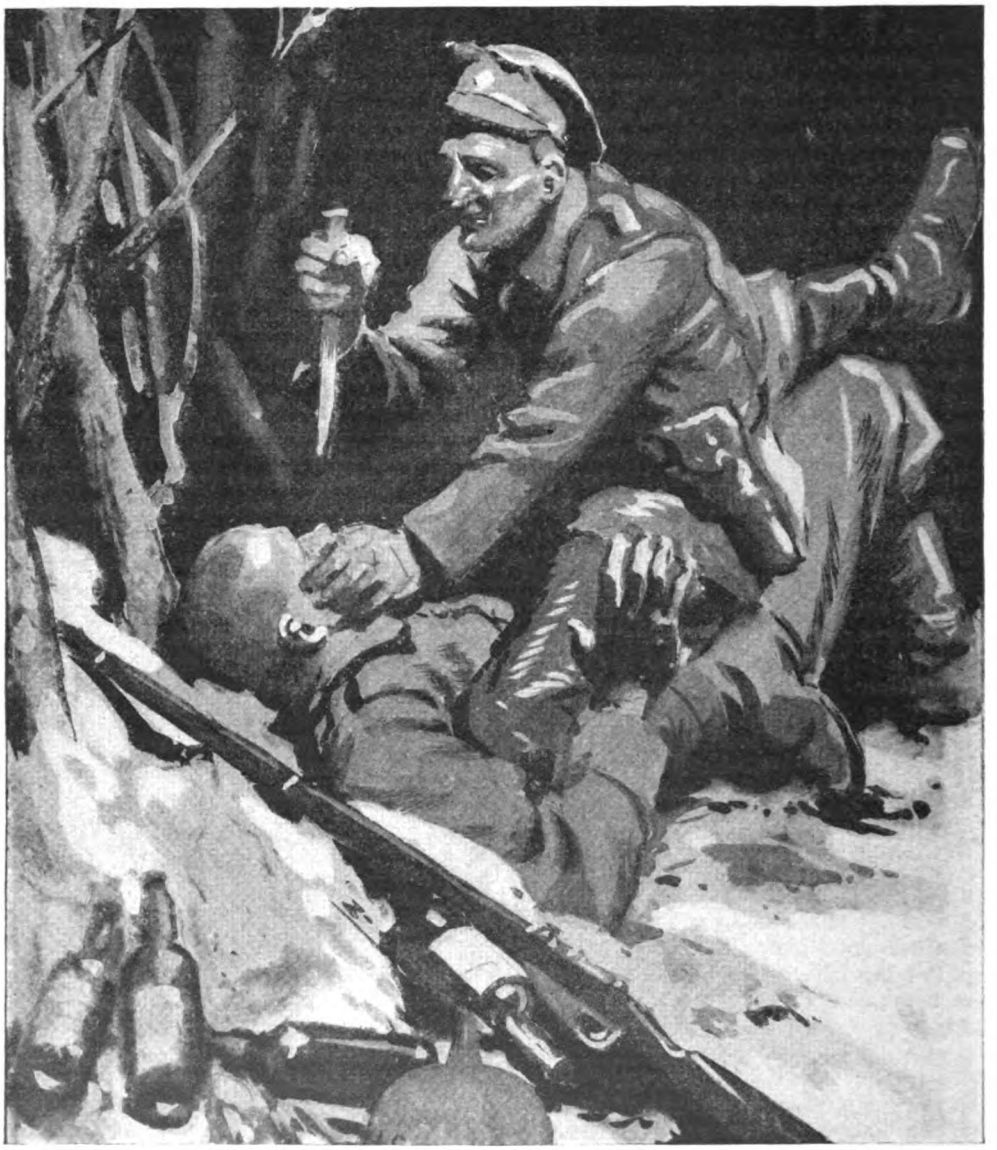
"Yes! Uncle! Cousin! Brother!" gasped his captive, displaying a good knowledge of English.

"I don't go so far as to say that," murmured Taliaferro, grimly. "But if you so much as half squeak, Uncle Razzy, I'll fair sink my knife in your ugly carcass."

With that he turned his uncle's double on to his face and knelt on his plump back while he bound his hands behind him with whipcord. Then he bound his ankles, turned him over, cut away some inches of his shirt, rolled them round a stick, and tied that effective gag in his mouth. Then an expert policeman could not have been quicker going through him. There were five cigars and a score of cigarettes and nearly a hundred francs in French money, very useful and welcome. Also there was a Colt automatic, a prize from some dead, or captured, British officer. Taliaferro had often wished for an automatic of his own.

In the pack was a large provision of sausage and bread. Also there were fourteen more cigars. Taliaferro felt a plutocrat.

Then he turned his attention to the bottles. Two were empty, three contained wine, one cognac. His eyes were full of joyful thank-



'IF YOU SO MUCH AS HALF SQUEAK, UNCLE RAZZY, I'LL FAIR SINK MY KNIFE IN YOUR UGLY CARCASS.'

fulness as he raised it to his lips. Then he lowered it untasted, frowning, and looked over his shoulder towards the child's hiding-place. It would not do; he would need all his wits to get her away. If he began, he would drink the bottle dry. He always did. He swore softly as he forced the cork back into it. Human self-denial has seldom reached a loftier height.

He dragged his captive five yards in among the tangle, set him up against a tree-trunk, and tested the gag.

Then he whispered: "Bye-bye, Uncle Razzy. I'll fetch you after sundown—p'r'aps. Don't pull at those knots. They're made to tighten, not loosen. You'll only make yourself durned uncomfortable."

He removed the traces of his captive's passage, threw his helmet into the tangle, hid the rifle, pack, cartridge-belt, water-bottle and the other bottles, and resumed his exploration. He examined the track trodden by the sniper to his lair, and came to the satisfactory conclusion that it had been trodden

by one pair of boots only. The prints were plain enough, for there had been plenty of rain, and in places they had trodden it muddy. He crawled down it to the turfed glade in which the ruined cottage stood and crawled round it. All the prints about it had been made by one pair of boots.

Then he perceived that the sniper had made a definite path round the cottage to a shell-hole in its back wall. He thrust his arm into the rubble which half filled the shattered room; his hand felt the cold glass of bottles. He was pleased; always at some point in his future scouting expeditions he would reach that hole in the wall.

Naturally there had been only one sniper in the coppice. A man with such a treasure to draw on would readily forego the comfort and pleasure of the companionship of his fellows when he went sniping.

He had learned all he wished to know about the coppice and he made his way quickly, but still with a cautiousness that prevented him from making more than a certain rustling, to the spot where he had hidden the sniper's rifle and pack. He turned the bread, which seemed to him poor and unappetizing, out of the pack and put the bottles in. He took a careful look round the lair, to make sure that no slightest trace of his visit was to be seen, then girt on the pack, water-bottle, and cartridge-belt, and with the rifle in his hand returned to the child's hiding-place.

He found her still asleep and did not wake her. He scooped himself out a hiding-place beside her, made a meal off the sniper's sausage and his own biscuit, lit a cigar, and lay smoking peaceably with his eyes on the child's face. Already it was less haggard; and her lips were no longer bluish but faintly pink. He felt a strong proprietary interest in her.

He had nearly finished his second cigar when she cried out sharply in her sleep and awoke. Her eyes were full of the horror of a nightmare; and for the moment she did not recognize him. When she did the horror began to fade out of her face.

He smiled at her stiffly (smiling was not one of his accomplishments) and patted her little hand gently.

Then he set about giving her another meal: slices of the sniper's sausage on biscuit and a cake of chocolate. He doled the food out to her. She showed herself still very hungry. A draught from his water-bottle ended her meal.

Then they conversed with difficulty. The few words of French that he knew were inapplicable to their situation; and they chiefly used signs. He learnt that her name was Babette—Babette Savary. Her father had gone to fight the Boches; her mother had been killed by a shell. He showed his sympathy by patting her hand.

Then he made it clear to her that she should watch while he slept. He did not think that there was anyone to keep watch against, but, responsible for her, he would omit no precaution. Also, though he did not think that he would find it difficult to get her safely away, he wished to have all his wits about him when he made the attempt; and an hour's sleep would be good for them. She nodded her comprehension almost vigorously.

He was asleep in three minutes, and an hour later he awoke fresh and alert. She smiled at him. From the height and position of the sun he gathered that it was about one o'clock. The enemy would be somnolent from their midday meal, and as quiet as they were likely to be. It was a good time for observation.

He crawled to the edge of the coppice which faced their lines, and studied the position of their trenches and the lie of the ground from the point of view of making raids on them. He had no need to make a map; his was a mind trained to retain the configuration of the ground, to judge and remember distances. He was annoyed that he could not do a little sniping. Hitherto the enemy had sniped, not been sniped, from the coppice, and they were careless. He saw his way to getting three or four before they discovered that they were being sniped from it. Then, of course, they would shell it, and Babette was in it. However, he could always come sniping another day. He would.

At the end of an hour's patient and fruitful observation he returned to Babette. He found that now that hunger had gone and hope returned, the feminine instinct had re-asserted itself. She had cleaned her face with water from the sniper's water-bottle and combed out her hair with her fingers. Thanks also to a child's marvellous power of recuperation, she looked a different creature. Her cheeks were hardly hollow. He perceived that she was younger than he had thought, not more than ten years old.

Her lips were wreathed with smiles of welcome as he crawled back into their lair, and when he stretched himself at full length she snuggled up against him. It gave him

a curious, pleasant feeling he could not remember ever having felt before. He put an arm round her. He lit a cigar, and presently she fell asleep. He smoked on, finding the sound of her gentle breathing uncommonly soothing.

At about six they made another meal. In the middle of it the evening hate began. Now and again Babette quivered and squeezed a little nearer to him when a rafale of high explosive shells burst on one line or the other.

The evening hate died down with the waning daylight, but it was not till the dark hour before the rising of the moon that Taliaferro set about getting Babette to the British lines, or, to be exact, to the trench where his own company was posted. He was resolved to bring her to that trench and no other. There there would be less chance that she would be taken away from him. His was not a company to let go of anything it had got hold of without good and loud howls of protest.

He was in two minds whether to take his sniper with him that night or fetch him the next. He put it to himself that prayer and fasting would do Uncle Razzy a lot of good, and he could at any rate be sure of the fasting. On the other hand Uncle Razzy, looked at from the point of view of a packhorse, was alluring. He decided to take him.

Accordingly he carried Babette to the sniper's lair and fetched Uncle Razzy out of the bushes. Babette cried out at the sight of him, but he reassured her easily. Then he loaded his captive with his pack, in which were the four precious bottles, rolled in squares of Uncle Razzy's blanket, slung the rifle on his back, girded him with the cartridge-belt, and fastened the two empty water-bottles to his belt, one on either side. He improvised a leading-rein with twelve feet of whipcord, ending in a noose round Uncle Razzy's neck. There would be no difficulty about his strangling himself, if he were minded to make a gallant effort to return to the Fatherland.

They started in single file, Babette first, then Taliaferro leading Uncle Razzy. There were always their two bodies between the child and a bullet.

Taliaferro and fear were not wholly strangers, but they had not often met. During that journey they met many times. Never a star shell, German or British, rose bright in the air but Taliaferro's heart sank hard towards his boots. The detestable feeling in the pit of the stomach which assures a man that he is badly frightened oppressed him for minutes at a time. Babette soon came to know that the moment a star shell broke the darkness she would find herself flat on the ground in Taliaferro's arms. Presently she was a little quicker to drop than he was himself. Uncle Razzy was the slowest. His heavy breathing annoyed Taliaferro. The thought that, if the enemy should start searching out the ground with machine guns, they would find Uncle Razzy first was a faint comfort to him.

His hunter's eyes saw far more clearly in the dimness than did those of his companions, and when they came to a stretch of ground pitted with shell-holes he picked up Babette and carried her. It annoyed him that he was not broad enough to shield all of her.

Twice Uncle Razzy fell into a shell-hole. Twice Taliaferro had to loosen the noose round his neck before he thumped him.

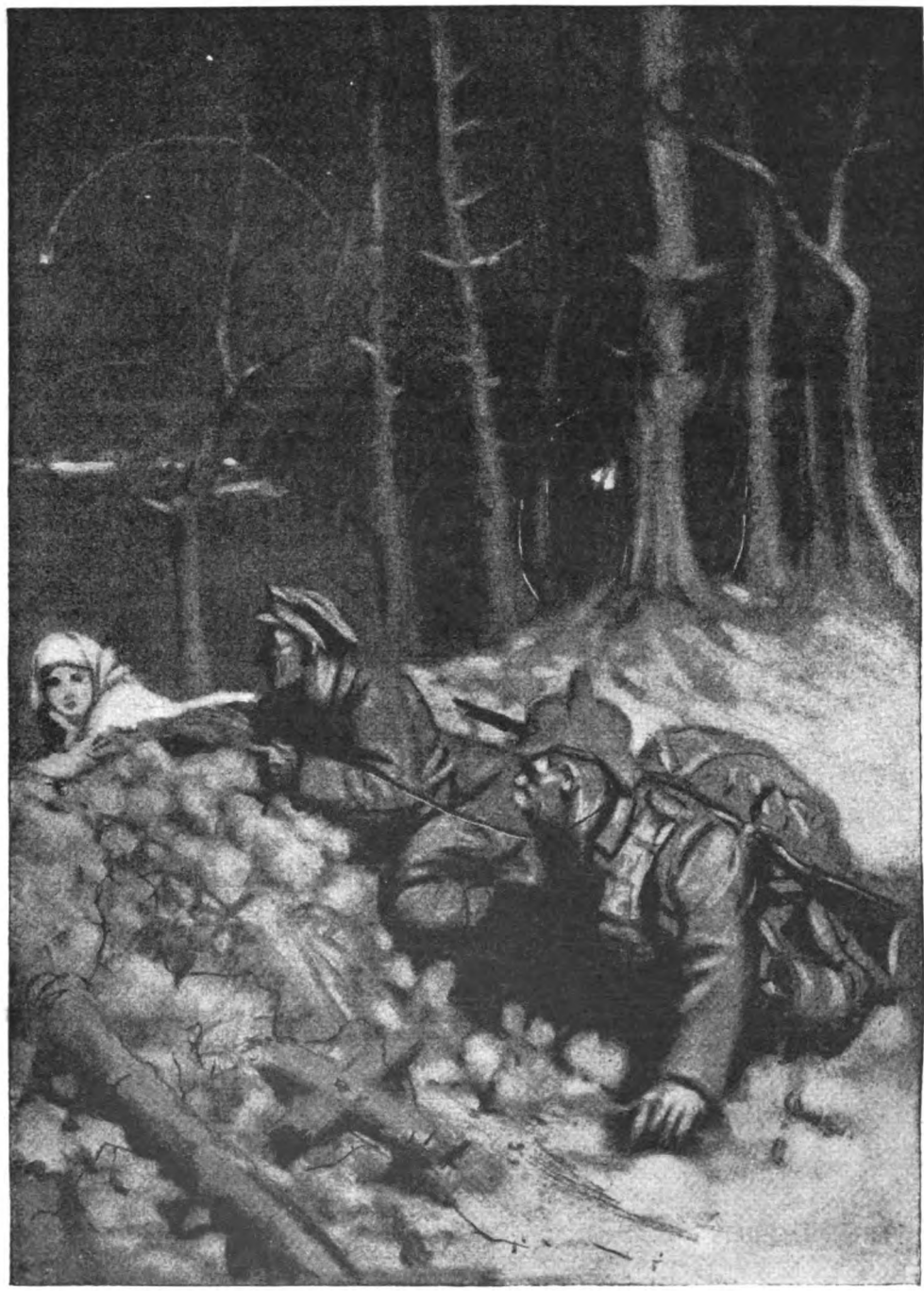
When they were a hundred yards from the British trenches Taliaferro put his hands round his mouth and sent the hoot of an owl towards them. He explained to Babette and Uncle Razzy that he did not wish any Canadian son of a gun to draw a bead on him. Babette did not understand; she thought his hooting a pleasant accomplishment, a sign of high spirits. Ten yards farther on he hooted again, and an answering hoot came to them. He was relieved of all fear of danger from his friends; word would be passed along that a scout was coming in.

The last fifty yards were the most trying stage of the journey. They had to go slowly, crawling under the wire entanglements. Taliaferro was in a cold sweat, for at any moment the enemy might start sweeping the wire and the trench parapet in hope to catch a working party. Once Uncle Razzy stuck. Taliaferro not only tore him clear painfully, but he thumped him till he wept.

Twenty yards from the parapet Babette, feeble from her privations, came to a stop. Taliaferro ground his teeth and sweated helplessly till she was again able to crawl on.

At last he lowered her gently from the parapet into the trench, dropped on his feet beside her with a great sigh of relief, and stood fairly gasping while she blinked in the light of an electric torch someone had turned on her.

"What the blazes you got there, Mad?" said the sergeant.



"TALIAFERRO WAS IN A COLD SWEAT, FOR AT ANY MOMENT THE ENEMY MIGHT START SWEEPING THE WIRE AND THE TRENCH PARAPET IN HOPE TO CATCH A WORKING PARTY."

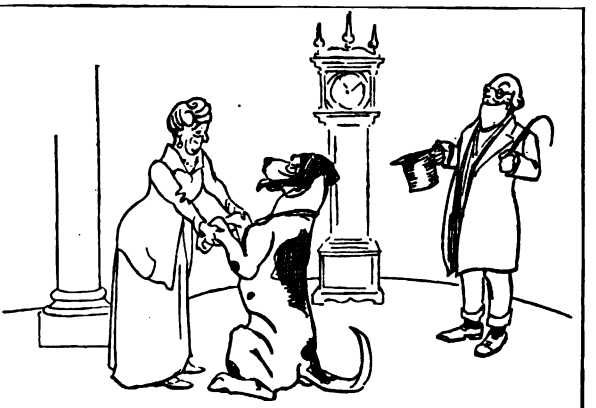
"I got a mascot, and a blame sight better mascot than any old goat," said Taliaferro, bitterly.

With a soft, sobbing squeak Uncle Razzy rolled over the parapet and knocked him off his feet.

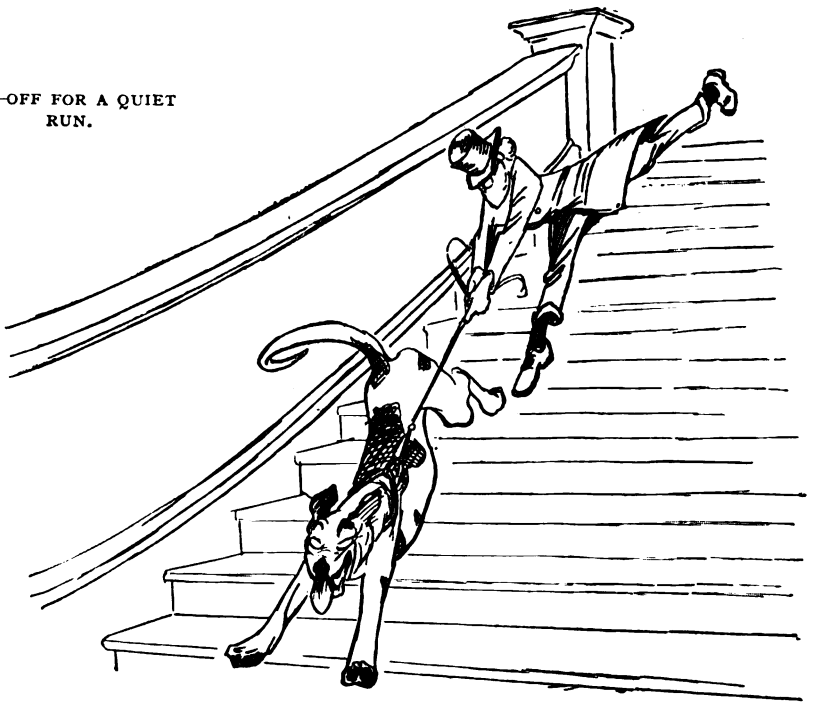
TAKING THE DOG FOR A RUN.

By

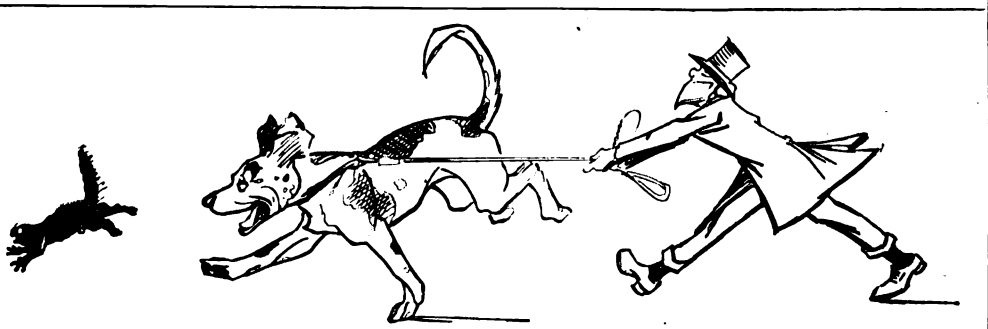
J. A. SHEPHERD.



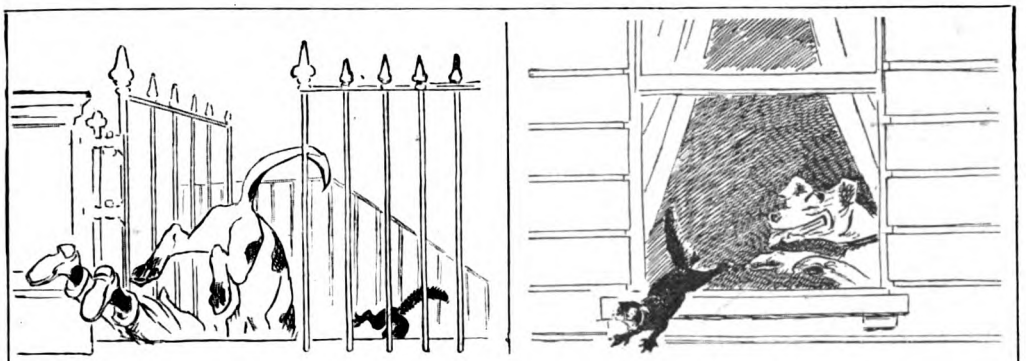
1.—"GOOD-BYE! AND MIND YOU DON'T GET INTO MISCHIEF."



2.—OFF FOR A QUIET RUN.

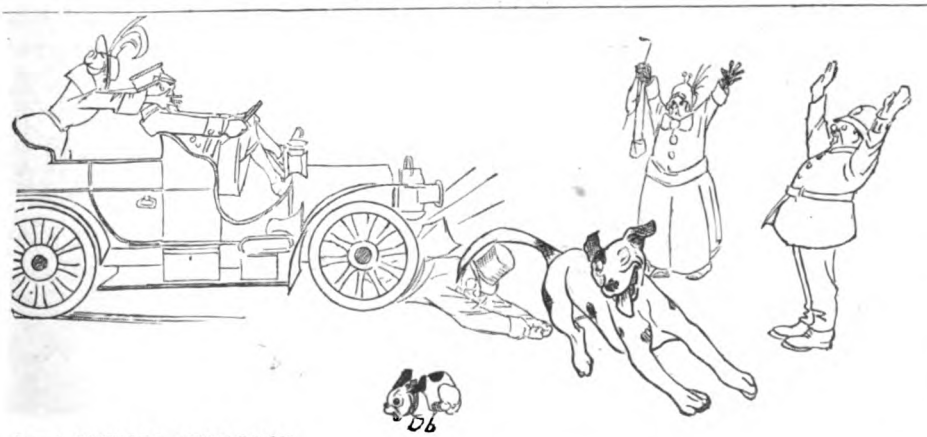


3.—AN IRRESISTIBLE TEMPTATION.

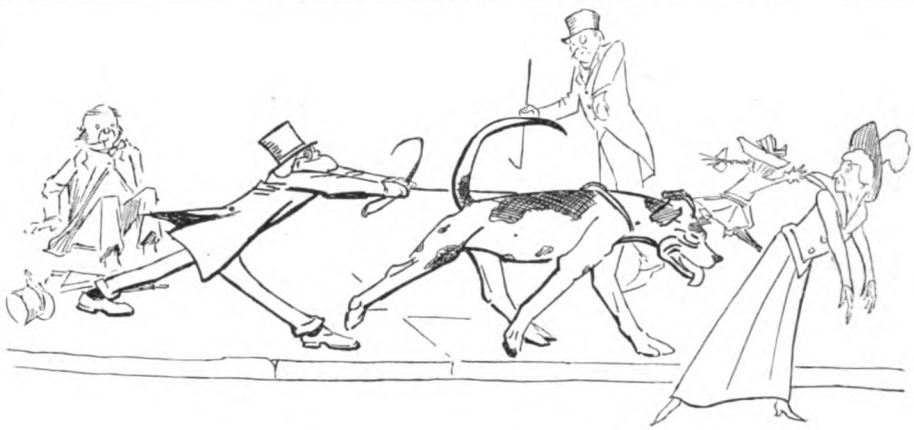


4.—IN —AND— 5.—OUT.

6.—IN FULL CRY.

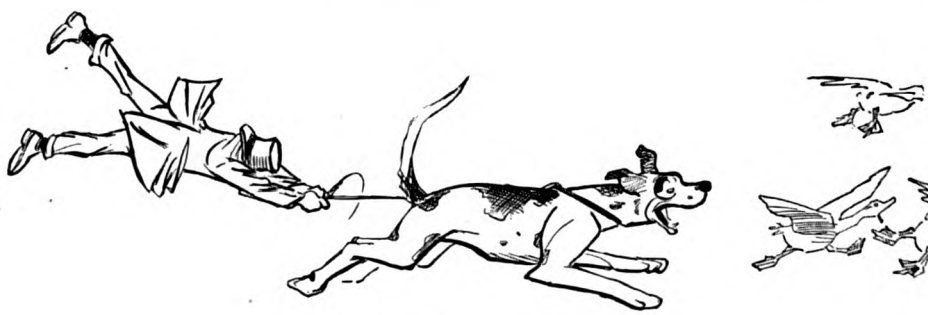


7.—A COUNTER ATTRACTION.

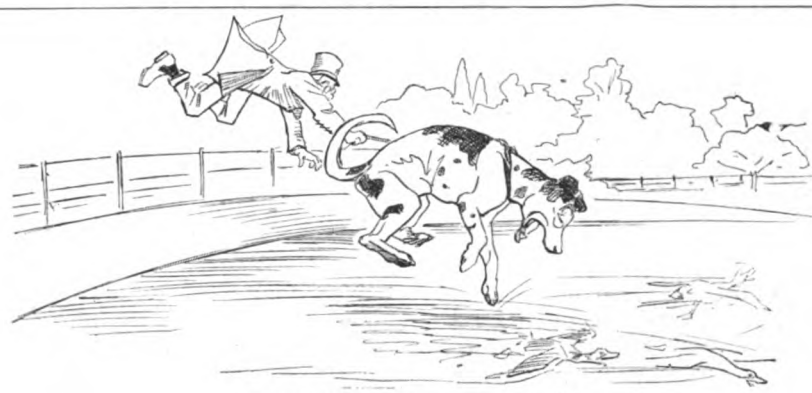


8.—"NOW LET'S TRY THE PARK."

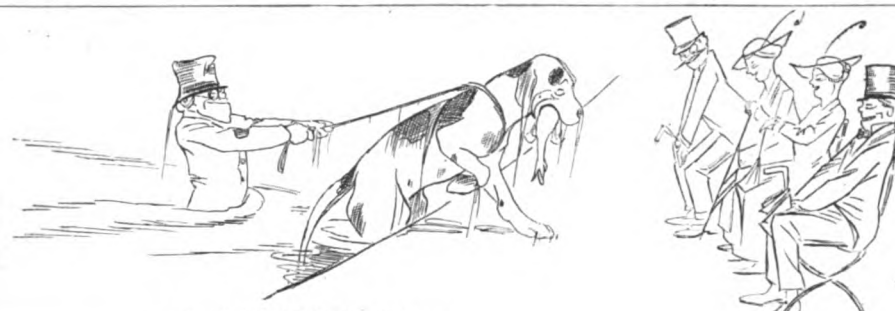
9.—IN ROTTEN ROW.



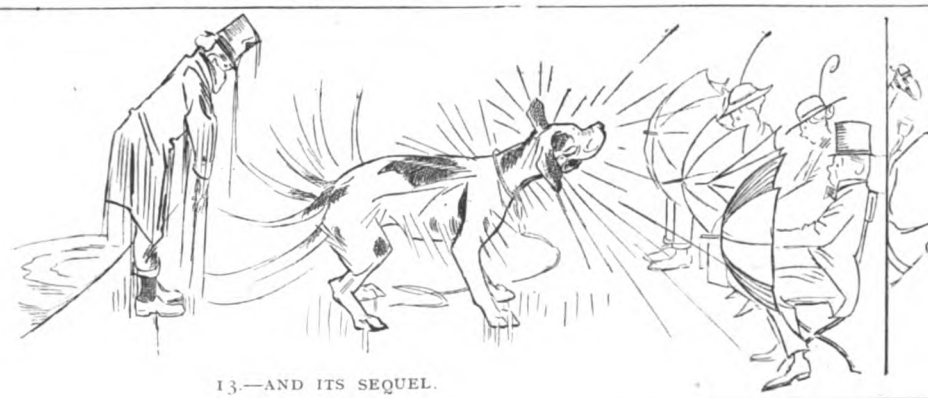
10.—"WHO SAID 'DUCKS'?"



11.—"MUST HAVE JUST ONE!".



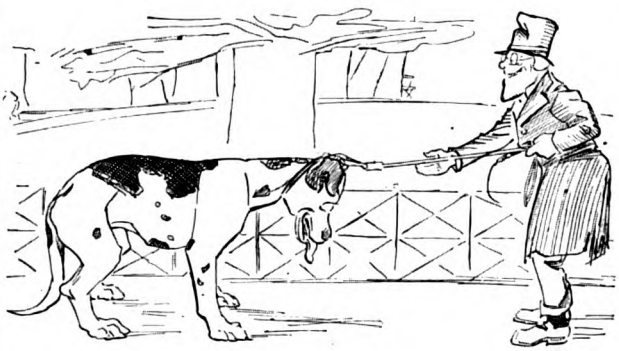
12.—A TRIUMPHANT EXIT—



13.—AND ITS SEQUEL.

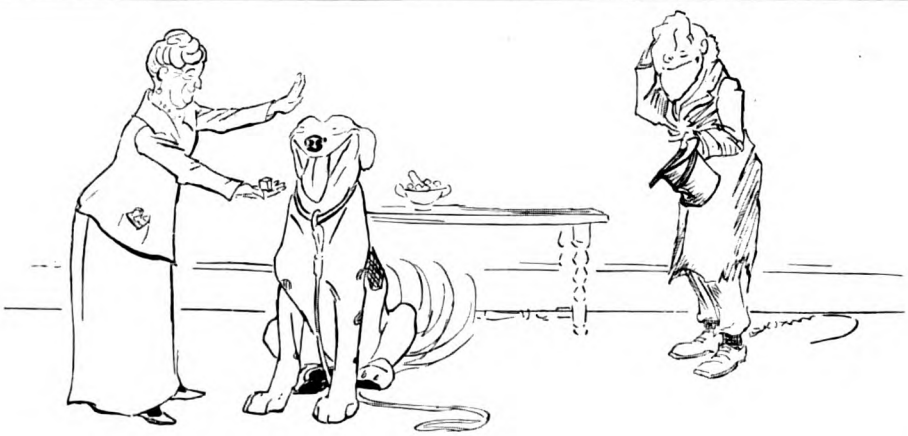
14.—SO VERY AFFECTIONATE!

15.—A BEE-LINE FOR HOME.



16.—JUST A LITTLE TIRED.

17.—A LIFT IN A TAXI.



18.—"YOU'VE BEEN A—VERY—BAD—OLD—DOGGIE!"

A Happy Solution.

A CHESS STORY.

By RAYMUND ALLEN.

Illustrated by Stanley Davis.

THE portmanteau, which to Kenneth Dale's strong arm had been little more than a feather-weight on leaving the station, seemed to have grown heavier by magic in the course of the half-mile that brought him to Lord Churt's country house. He put the portmanteau down in the porch with a sense of relief to his cramped arm, and rang the bell.

He had to wait for a few minutes, and then Lord Churt opened the door in person. His round, rubicund face, that would hardly have required any make-up to present an excellent "Mr. Pickwick," beamed a welcome. "Come in, my dear boy, come in. I'm delighted to see you. I wish you a merry Christmas."

It was Christmas Eve, and his manner was bubbling over with the kindliness appropriate to the season. He seized the portmanteau and carried it into the hall.

"I am my own footman and parlour-maid and everything else for the moment. Packed all the servants off to a Christmas entertainment at the village school and locked the doors after 'em. My wife's gone, too, and Aunt Blaxter."

"And Norah?" Kenneth inquired.

"Ah! Norah!" Churt answered, with a friendly clap on Kenneth's shoulder. "Norah's the only person that really matters, of course she is, and quite right too. Norah stayed in to send off a lot of Christmas cards, and I fancy she is still in her room, but she must have disposed of the cards, because they are in the letter-bag. She would have been on the look-out for you, no doubt, but your letter said you were not coming."

"Yes, I know. I thought I couldn't get away, but to-day my chief's heart was softened, and he said he would manage to do without me till the day after to-morrow. So I made a rush for the two-fifteen, and just caught it."

"And here you are as a happy surprise for your poor, disappointed Norah—and for us all," he added, genially.

"I hope you approve of my *fiancée*." Kenneth remarked, with a smile that expressed confidence as to the answer.

"My dear Kenneth," Churt replied, "I can say with sincerity that I think her both beautiful and charming. We were very glad to ask her here, and her singing is a great pleasure to us." He hesitated for a moment before continuing. "You must forgive us cautious old people if we think the engagement just a little bit precipitate. As Aunt Blaxter was saying to-day, you can't really know her very well on such a short acquaintance, and you know nothing at all of her people."

Kenneth mentally cursed Aunt Blaxter for a vinegar-blooded old killjoy, but did not express any part of the sentiment aloud.

"We must have another talk about your great affair later," Churt went on. "Now come along to the library. I am just finishing a game of chess with Sir James Winslade, and then we'll go and find where Miss Norah is hiding."

He stopped at a table in the passage that led from the hall to the library, and took a bunch of keys out of his pocket. "She was sending you a letter, so there can be no harm in our rescuing it out of the bag." He unlocked the private letter-bag and turned out a pile of letters on to the table, muttering an occasional comment as he put them back, one by one, in the bag, in his search for the letter he was looking for. "Aunt Emma—ah, I ought to have written to her too; must write for her birthday instead. Mrs. Dunn—same thing there, I'm afraid. Red Cross—hope that won't get lost; grand work, the Red Cross. Ah, here we are: 'Kenneth Dale, Esq., 31, Valpy Street, London, S.W.'" He tumbled the rest of the letters back into the bag and re-locked it. Put it in your pocket and come along, or Winslade will think I am never coming back."

He was delayed a few moments longer, however, to admit the servants on their return from the village, and he handed the

bag to one of them to be taken to the post-office.

In the library Sir James Winslade was seated at the chess-board, and Churt's private secretary, Gornay, a tall, slender figure, with a pale complexion and dark, clever eyes, was watching the game.

The secretary greeted Kenneth rather frigidly, and turned to Churt. "Have the letters gone to post yet?"

"Yes; did you want to send any?"

"Only a card that I might have written," Gornay answered, "but it isn't of any consequence"; and he sat down again beside the chess-players.

Churt had the black pieces, black nominally only, for actually they were the little red pieces of a travelling board. He appeared to have got into difficulties, and, greatly to the satisfaction of Kenneth, who was impatient to go in quest of Norah, the game came to an end after a few more moves.

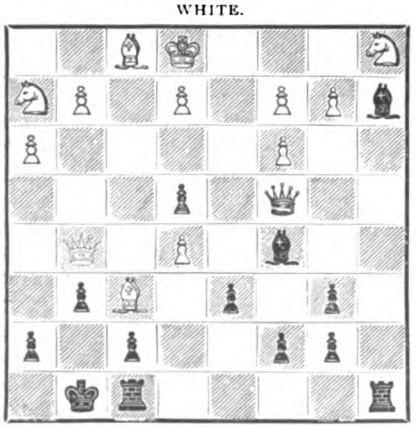
"I don't see any way out of this," Churt remarked, after a final, perplexed survey of the position. "You come at me, next move, with queen or knight, and, either way, I am done for. It is your game. I resign."

"A lucky win for you, Sir James," Gornay observed.

"Why lucky?" Winslade asked. "You told us we had both violated every sound principle of development in the opening, but could Black have done any better for the last few moves?"

"He can win the game as the pieces now stand," Gornay answered.

WHITE.



BLACK.

Black to play and win.

He proved the statement by making a few moves on the board, and then replaced the pieces as they had been left.

"Well, it's your game fair and square, all the same," Churt remarked, good-humouredly. "I should never have found the right reply for myself."

Gornay continued to study the board with attention, and his face assumed an expression of keenness, as though he had discovered some fresh point to interest him in the position. At the moment Kenneth merely chafed at the delay. It was an hour or so later only that the secretary's comments on the game assumed for him a vital importance that made him recall them with particularity.

"If the play was rather eccentric sometimes, I must say it was bold and dashing enough on both sides," Gornay commented. "For instance, when Lord Churt gave up his knight for nothing, and when you gave him the choice of taking your queen with either of two pawns at your queen's knight's sixth." He turned to Churt. "Possibly you might have done better to take the queen with the bishop's pawn instead of with the rook's."

"I dare say, I dare say," Churt replied. "I should have probably got into a mess, whatever I played. But come along, now, all of you, and see if we can find some tea."

Kenneth contrived, before entering the drawing-room, to intercept Norah for an exchange of greetings in private, and her face was still radiant with the delight of the unexpected meeting as they entered the room.

After tea Sir James carried off the secretary to keep him company in the smoking-room, and Churt turned to Norah. "You must sing one of the Christmas carols you promised us, and then you young folk may go off to the library to talk over your own private affairs. I know you must both be longing to get away from us old fogies."

"Thank you, Lord Churt, for 'old fogies,' on behalf of your wife and myself," Aunt Blaxter commented, with a mild sarcasm that somehow failed of its intended playful effect. But Norah had sat down at once to the piano, and her voice rang out in a joyous carol before he could frame a suitable reply.

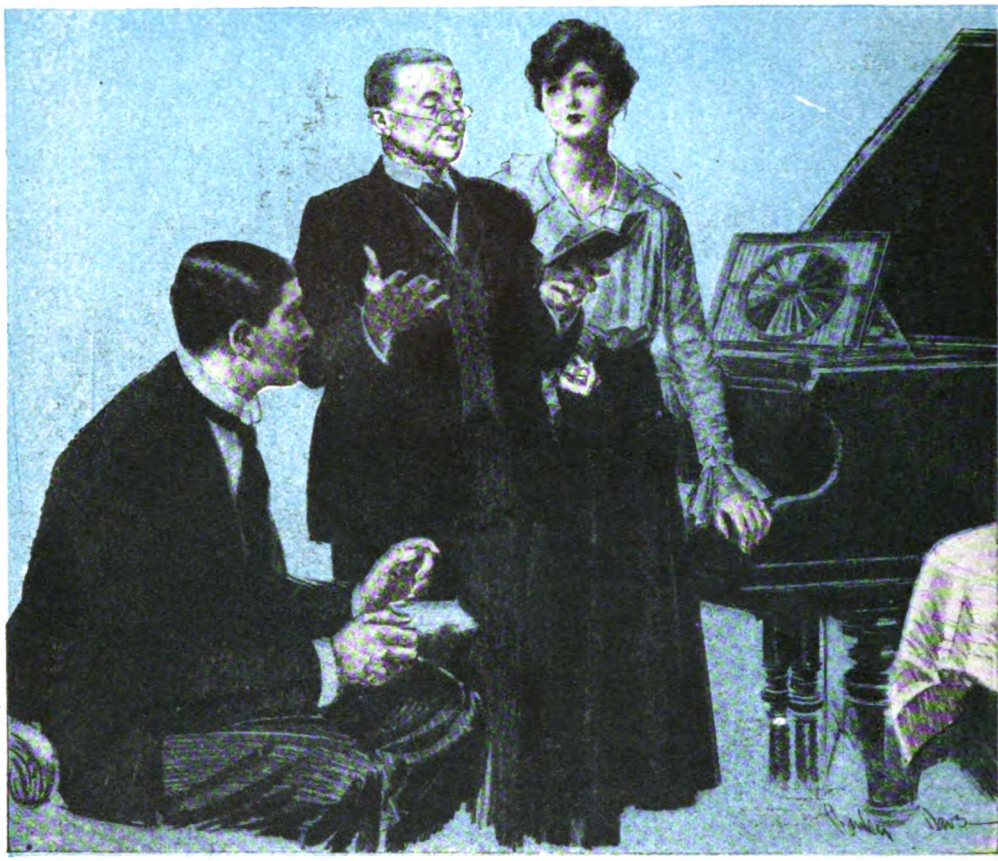
A second carol was asked for, that the others might join in, and in the course of it Kenneth's hand came upon the letter in his pocket. He was opening the envelope as Norah rose from the piano. Her eye caught her own handwriting and she blushed very red. "Be careful, Ken. Don't let anything fall out!" she cried in alarm.

Thus warned, he drew the letter out delicately, being careful to leave in the envelope a little curl of brown hair, a lover's token that she would have been shy to see exposed to

"KENNETH CONTRIVED, BEFORE ENTERING THE DRAWING-ROOM, TO INTERCEPT NORAH FOR AN EXCHANGE OF GREETINGS IN PRIVATE."

the eyes of the others. But, in his care for this, a thin bit of paper fluttered from the fold of the letter to the carpet, and all eyes instinctively followed it. It was a Bank of England note for a thousand pounds.

Kenneth looked at Norah in wonder, but got no enlightenment. Then at Lord Churt, as the bare possibility occurred to his mind that, in a Christmas freak of characteristic generosity, he might have somehow contrived to get it enclosed with her letter. But Churt's dumbfounded expression was not the acting of any genial comedy. His hands trembled as he put on his glasses to compare an entry in his pocket-book with the number on the note. He was the first to break the amazed silence. "This is a most extraordinary thing. This is the identical bank-note that I put into



"THIS IS A MOST EXTRAORDINARY THING. THIS IS THE IDENTICAL BANK-NOTE THAT

the Red Cross envelope this afternoon as my Christmas gift, the very same that I got for the purpose of sending anonymously, and that you ladies were interested to inspect at breakfast time."

Each looked at the others for an explanation, till all eyes settled on Norah, as the person who might be expected to give one.

Churt looked vexed and troubled, Aunt Blaxter severely suspicious, as she saw that the girl remained silent, with a face that was losing its colour. "As the note was found in a letter sent by Norah, she would be the natural person to explain how it got there," she remarked.

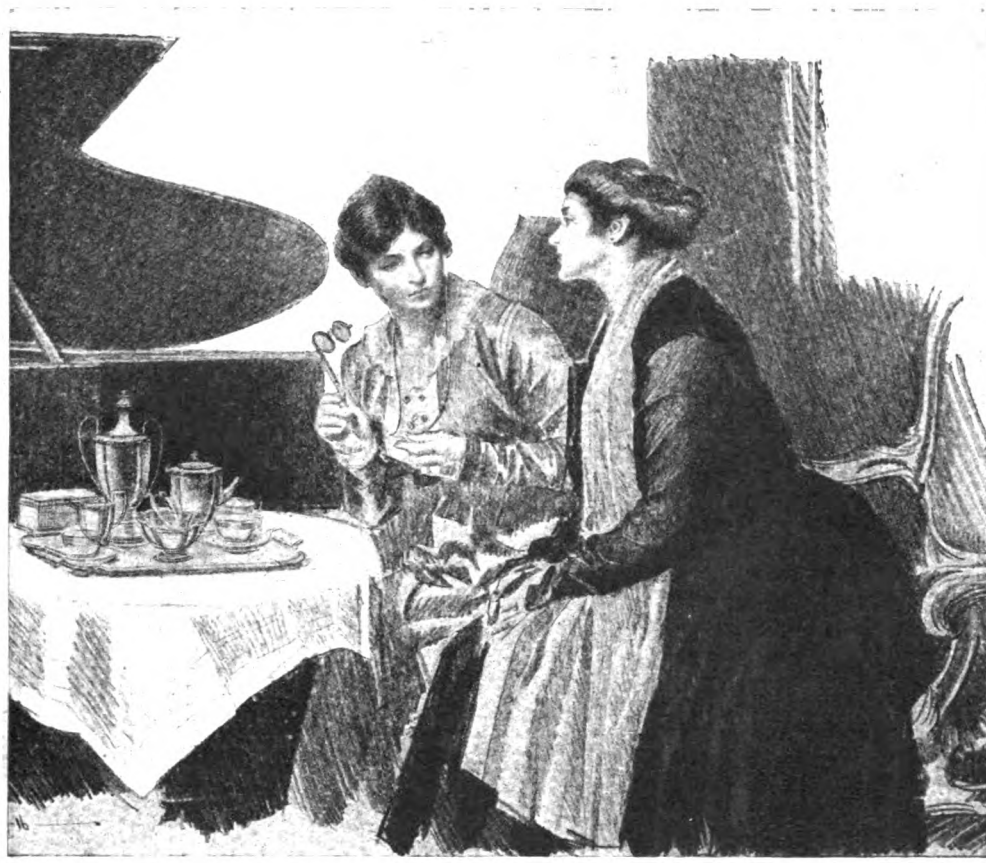
"I haven't the remotest notion how it got there," Norah replied. "I can only say that I did not put it there, and that I never saw it again since breakfast time, until it dropped out of my letter a few moments ago."

"Very strange," Aunt Blaxter remarked, dryly. Kenneth turned upon her hotly. "You don t suggest that Norah stole the note, I imagine!"

"My dear people," Churt intervened, soothingly, "do let us keep our heads cool, and not have any unpleasant scene."

Kenneth still glared. "If Norah had put the note into this envelope, she would have referred to it in her letter. I suppose you will accept my word that she doesn't."

"Read out the postscript, Ken," Norah requested. "Miss Blaxter may like to suggest that it refers to the note." The girl looked at her with a face that was now blazing with anger, and Kenneth read out: "P.S. Don't let anybody see what I am sending you!" It had not occurred to him that it could be taken as anything but a jesting reference to the lock of hair, the note of exclamation at the end giving the effect of "As though I should ever dream you would," or some equivalent. The matter was growing too serious for any shamefacedness, and he produced the lock of hair in explanation. It



I PUT INTO THE RED CROSS ENVELOPE THIS AFTERNOON AS MY CHRISTMAS GIFT."

was cruel luck, he reflected, that the unfortunate postscript should be capable of misconstruction. He had counted on Norah's making a triumphant conquest of the Churt household, and it was exceedingly galling to find her, instead, exposed to an odious suspicion. Aunt Blaxter's demeanour was all the more maddening that he could think of no means to prove its unreasonableness. He looked gratefully at Lady Churt, as her gentle voice gave the discussion a fresh turn. "How long has Mr. Gornay been with us?" she asked her husband.

Churt looked shocked. "My dear, we mustn't make any rash insinuations in a matter of this kind. What possible motive could Gornay have for putting the note into Norah's letter, if he meant to steal it? Besides, my evidence clears him."

"Would you mind telling us what you did with the note after you showed it at the breakfast table this morning?" Kenneth asked.

"I'll tell you exactly," Churt answered. "When it had made the round of the breakfast table, I put it back in my pocket-book and kept it in my pocket till this afternoon. It was while we were playing chess that I remembered that the bag would be going to post earlier than usual, and I put the note in the Red Cross envelope with the printed address and stuck it down and put it into the bag. I came straight back to the library, and I remember being surprised at the move I found Winslade had played, because he was offering me his queen for nothing. Just at that moment it occurred to my mind that Norah had probably already put her letters into the bag, and that, if so, I might as well lock it at once, for fear of forgetting to do so later. I looked at the chess-board for a few minutes, standing up, and then went and found that Norah's letters were in the bag, and I locked it, and came back and took Winslade's queen."

"But I don't quite see what all that has to

do with Mr. Gornay, or how it clears him," Lady Churt remarked.

"Why, my dear, whoever took the note out of one envelope and put it into the other must have done so in the few minutes between my two visits to the bag. It was the only time that the letter was in the bag without its being locked. And during that time Gornay was watching the chess, so it can't have been him."

"Was he in the library all the time you were playing?" Kenneth asked.

"I can't say that," Churt replied. "I don't think he was. I didn't notice particularly. But I am positive that he did not enter or leave the room while I was standing looking at Winslade's move, and he must have been there when Winslade offered his queen and when I took it, because he was commenting on those very moves after the game was finished, and suggesting that I might have done better to take with the other pawn. You heard him yourself."

"Yes," Kenneth answered. "I follow that. But there is such a thing as picking a lock, you know."

"The makers guarantee that it can't be done to this one," Churt answered, "and the key has always been in my possession, so he couldn't have had a duplicate made, even if there had been any time."

Norah interposed in a voice that trembled with indignation. "In short, Lord Churt, you think the evidence conclusive against the only other person, except Sir James Winslade, who was in the house. I have only my word to give against it."

"It is worth all the evidence in the world," Kenneth cried, and she thanked her champion with a bright glance.

"Lady Churt is quite right," Kenneth went on. "I'd stake my life it was that sneaking Gornay. Have him in here now, and see if his face doesn't show his guilt when I call him a thief."

"Not for the world!" Churt exclaimed, aghast. "We should have a most painful scene. This is no case for rash precipitancy." He assumed the air of judicial solemnity with which, from the local bench, he would fine a rascal five shillings who ought to have gone down for six months. "I entirely refuse to entertain any suspicion of anybody under this roof, guests, servants, or anyone else. It will probably turn out that some odd little accident has occurred, that will seem simple enough when it is explained. On the other hand, it is just conceivable that some evil-disposed person from outside should have got into the house, though I confess I can't understand the motive of their action if they did. In any case, I feel it my duty, for the credit of my household, to have the matter cleared up by the proper authority."

"What do you mean by the proper authority?" Lady Churt asked. "I didn't think the local police were very clever that time when poor Kelpie got stolen."

The Aberdeen terrier at her feet looked up at the sound of his name, and Churt continued: "I shall telephone to Scotland Yard. If Shapland is there, I am sure he would come down at once in his car. He could be here in less than two hours. Until he, or somebody else, arrives I beg that none of you say a word about this affair to anyone who is not now present in this room."

"Quite the most proper course," Aunt Blaxter observed. "It is only right that guilt should be brought home to the proper person, *whoever* that person may be."

With a tact of which Kenneth had hardly thought him capable, Churt turned to Norah. "I have no doubt Shapland will clear up the mystery for us satisfactorily. Meantime, my dear girl, you and I find ourselves in the same boat, for there is only my word for it that I ever put the note into the Red Cross envelope at all."

The kindness of his manner brought the tears to her eyes, and Kenneth took her away to the library.

"Fancy their thinking I was a thief—a thief, Ken—a common mean *thief!*"

"Nonsense, my darling girl," he said. "Nobody could believe any such rubbish."

"That odious Aunt Blaxter does, at any rate. She as good as said so." She sat down in a chair, and began to grow calmer, while he paced about the room, angry but thoughtful.

"I was glad I had you to stick up for me, Ken, and Lord Churt is an old dear."

"He's a silly old dear, all the same," he answered. "He has more money than he knows what to do with, but fancy fluttering a thousand-pound note through the Christmas post, to get lost among all the robins and good wishes!"

They were interrupted at this point by the entry of Gornay.

"I am not going to stay," he said, in answer to their not very welcoming expressions. "I have only come to ask a quite small favour. I am having a great argument with Sir James about character-reading from handwriting, and I want specimens from people we both know. Any little scrap will do."

Kenneth took up a sheet of note-paper from a writing-table and wrote, "All is not gold that glitters," and Norah added below, "Birds of a feather flock together." It seemed the quickest way to get rid of him.

Gornay looked at the sheet with a not quite satisfied air. "I would *rather* have had something not written specially. Nobody ever writes quite naturally when they know that it is for this sort of purpose. You haven't got an old envelope, or something like that?"

Neither could supply what he wanted, and he went off, looking a little disappointed.

"I wonder whether that was really what he wanted the writing for," Kenneth remarked, suspiciously. "He's a quick-witted knave. Look how sharp he was to see the right move in that game of chess. It wasn't very obvious."

The chess-board was lying open on the table, where Churt had left it before tea. He glanced at it, casually at first, and then with growing interest. He took up one of the pieces to examine it, then replaced it, to do the same with others, his manner showing all the time an increasing excitement.

"What is it, Ken?" Norah asked.

"Just a glimmer of something." He dropped into a chair. "I want to think—to think harder than ever in my life."

He leant forward, with his head resting on his hands, and she waited in silence till, after some minutes, he looked up.

"Yes, I begin to see light—more than a glimmer. He's a subtle customer, is Mr. Gornay, oh, very subtle!" He smiled, partly with the pleasure of finding one thread of a tangled web, partly with admiration for the cleverness that had woven it. "Would you like to know what he was really after when he came in here just now?"

"Very much," she answered. "But do you mean that he never had any argument with Sir James?"

"Oh, I dare say he had the argument all right—got it up for the occasion; but what he really wanted was this." He took out of his pocket the envelope in which the bank-note had been discovered. "The character-reading rot was not a bad shot at getting hold of it, and probably his only chance. But no, friend Gornay, you are not going to have that envelope—not for the thousand pounds you placed in it!"

"Do explain, Ken," Norah begged.

"I will presently," he answered, "but I want to piece the whole jigsaw together. There is still the other difficulty."

He dropped his eyes to the hearthrug again, and began to do his thinking aloud for her benefit. "Churt's reasoning is that Gornay must have been in here, watching the game, at the only time when the letters could have been tampered with, because he knew afterwards the move that was played just at the beginning of that time, and the move that was played just at the end. But why might not Winslade have told him about those two moves while Churt was letting me in at the front door? That would solve the riddle. I should have thought Winslade would have been too punctilious to talk about the game while his opponent was out of the room, but I'll go and ask him. I needn't tell him the reason why I want to know."

He came back almost immediately. "No, there was no conversation about the game while Churt was out of the room. Very well. Try the thing the other way round. Assume—as I think I can prove—that Gornay *did* tamper with the letters, the question is how could he tell that those two moves had been played?"

He took up the chess-board again and looked at it so intently and so long that, at last, Norah grew impatient.

"My dear boy, what *can* you be doing, poring all this time over the chess?"

"I have a curious sort of chess problem to solve before the Sherlock Holmes man turns up from Scotland Yard. Follow this a moment. If there was any way by which Gornay could find out that the two important moves had been played, without being present at the time and without being told, then Churt's argument goes for nothing, doesn't it?"

"Clearly; but what other way was there? Did he look in through the window?"

"I think we shall find it was something much cleverer than that. I think I shall be able to show that he could infer that those two moves had been played, without any other help, from the position of the pieces as they stood at the end of the game; as they stand on the board now." He again bent down over the board. "White plays queen to queen's knight's sixth, not taking anything, and Black takes the queen with the rook's pawn; those are the two moves."

For nearly another half-hour Norah waited in loyal silence, watching the alternations of his face as it brightened with the light of comprehension and clouded again with fresh perplexity.

At last he shut up the board and put it down, looking profoundly puzzled.

"Can it not be proved that the queen must have been taken at that particular square?" Norah inquired.

"No," he answered. "It might equally have been a rook. I can't make the matter out. So many of the jigsaw bits fit in that I know I must be right, and yet there is just one little bit that I can't find. By Jove!" he added, suddenly starting up, "I wonder if Churt could supply it?"

He was just going off to find out when a servant entered the room with a message that Lord Churt requested their presence in his study.

The conclave assembled in the study consisted of the same persons who, in the drawing-room, had witnessed the discovery of the bank-note, with the addition of Shapland, the detective from Scotland Yard. Lord Churt presided, sitting at the table, and Shapland sat by his side, with a face that might have seemed almost unintelligent in its lack of expression but for the roving eyes, that scrutinized in turn the other faces present.

Norah and Kenneth took the two chairs that were left vacant, and, as soon as the door was shut, Kenneth asked Churt a question.

"When you played your game of chess with Sir James Winslade this afternoon, did he give you the odds of the queen's rook?"

Everyone, except Norah and the sphinx-like detective, whose face gave no clue to his thoughts, looked surprised at the triviality of the question.

"I should hardly have thought this was a fitting occasion to discuss such a frivolous matter as a game of chess," Aunt Blaxter remarked, sourly.

"I confess I don't understand the relevance of your question," Churt answered. "As a matter of fact, he did give me those odds."

"Thank God!" Kenneth exclaimed, with an earnestness that provoked a momentary sign of interest from Shapland.

"I should like to hear what Mr. Dale has to say about this matter," he remarked. "Lord Churt has put me in possession of the circumstances."

"I have an accusation to make against Lord Churt's private secretary, Mr. Gornay. Perhaps he had better be present to hear it."

"HE TOOK

"Quite unnecessary, quite unnecessary," Churt interposed. "We will not have any unpleasant scenes if we can help it."

"Very well," Kenneth continued. "I only thought it might be fairer. I accuse Gornay of stealing the thousand-pound bank-note out of the envelope addressed to the Red Cross and putting it into a letter addressed to me. *I accuse him of using colourless ink, of a kind that would become visible after a few hours, to cross out my address and substitute another*, the address of a confederate, no doubt."

"You must be aware, Mr. Dale," Shapland observed, "that you are making a very serious allegation in the presence of witnesses. I presume you have some evidence to support it?"

UP ONE OF THE PIECES TO EXAMINE IT."

Kenneth opened the chess-board. "Look at the stains on those chess pieces. They were not there when the game was finished. They were there, not so distinctly as now, about an hour ago. Precisely those pieces, and only those, are stained that Gornay touched in showing that Lord Churt might have won the game. If they are not stains of invisible ink, why should they grow more distinct? If they are invisible ink, how did it get there, unless from Gornay's guilty fingers?"

He took out of his pocket the envelope of Norah's letter, and a glance at it brought a look of triumph to his face. He handed it to Shapland. "The ink is beginning to show there, too. It seems to act more slowly on the paper than on the polish of the chess-men."

"It is a difference of exposure to the air," Shapland corrected. "The envelope has been in your pocket. If we leave it there on the table, we shall see presently whether your deduction is sound. Meanwhile, if Mr. Gornay was the guilty person, how can you account for his presence in the library at the only time when a crime could have been committed?"

"By denying it," Kenneth answered. "What proof have we that he was there at that particular time?"

"How else could he know the moves that were played at that time?" Shapland asked.

Kenneth pointed again to the chess-board. "From the position of the pieces at the end of the game. Here it is. I can prove, from

the position of those pieces alone, *provided the game was played at the odds of queen's rook*, that White must, in the course of the game, have played his queen to queen's knight's sixth, not making a capture, and that Black must have taken it with the rook's pawn. If I can draw those inferences from the position, so could Gornay. We know how quickly he can think out a combination from the way in which he showed that Lord Churt could have won the game, when it looked so hopeless that he resigned."

The detective, fortunately, had an elementary knowledge of chess sufficient to enable him to follow Kenneth's demonstration.

"I don't suggest," Kenneth added, when the accuracy of the demonstration was admitted, "that he planned this *alibi* beforehand. It was a happy afterthought, that occurred to his quick mind when he saw that the position at the end of the game made it possible. What he relied on was the invisible ink trick, and that would have succeeded by itself, if I hadn't happened to turn up unexpectedly in time to intercept my letter from Norah."

While Kenneth was giving this last bit of explanation, Shapland had taken up the envelope again. As he had foretold, exposure to the air had brought out the invisible writing so that, although still faint, it was already legible. Only the middle line of the address, the number and name of the street, had been struck out with a single stroke, and another number and name substituted. The detective handed it to Churt. "Do you recognize the second handwriting, my lord?"

Churt put on his glasses and examined it. "I can't say that I do," he answered, "but it is not that of Mr. Gornay." He took another envelope out of his pocket-book, addressed to himself in his secretary's hand, and pointed out the dissimilarity of the two writings. Norah cast an anxious look at Kenneth, and Aunt Blaxter one of her sourest at the girl. The detective showed no surprise.

"None the less, my lord, I think it might forward our investigation if you would have Mr. Gornay summoned to this room. I don't think you need be afraid that there will be any scene," he added, and, for an instant, the faintest of smiles flitted across his lips.

Churt rang the bell and told the servant to ask his secretary to come to him.

"Mr. Gornay left an hour ago, my lord. He was called away suddenly and doesn't expect to see his grandmother alive."

"Poor old soul! On Christmas Eve, too!" Churt muttered, sympathetically, and this time Shapland allowed himself the indulgence of a rather broader smile.

"I guessed as much," he observed, "when I recognized the handwriting in which the envelope had been redirected, or I should have taken the precaution of going to fetch the gentleman, whom you know as Mr. Gornay, myself. He is a gentleman who is known to us at the Yard by more than one name, as well as by more than one handwriting, and now that we have so fortunately discovered his present whereabouts I can promise you that he will soon be laid by the heels. Perhaps Lord Churt will be kind enough to have my car ordered and to allow me to use his telephone."

"But you'll stay to dinner?" Churt asked. "It will be ready in a few minutes, and we shall none of us have time to dress."

"I am much obliged, my lord, but Mr. Dale has done my work for me here in a way that any member of the Yard might be proud of, and now I must follow the tracks while they are fresh. It may not prove necessary to trouble you any further about this matter, but I think you are likely to see an important development in the great Ashfield forgery case reported in the newspapers before very long."

"Well," Churt observed, "I think we may all congratulate ourselves on having got this matter cleared up without any unpleasant scenes. Now we shall be able to enjoy our Christmas. I call it a happy solution, a very happy solution."

His face beamed with relief and good-humour as he once more produced his pocket-book. "Norah, my dear, you must accept an old man's apology for causing you a very unpleasant afternoon; and you must accept this as well. No, I shall not take a refusal, and it will be much safer to send a *cheque* to the Red Cross."

[*The solution of the end-game given in this story, and the proof that a white queen must have been taken by the pawn at Q Kt 3, will be published in our next number.*]

MY LUCKIEST "FIND"

LEADING MANAGERS TELL HOW THEY DISCOVERED SOME NOW FAMOUS PLAYERS

OPPORTUNITY is a fine thing, and nowhere can opportunity mean so much as on the stage. One day an artiste may be hidden in the obscurity of the provinces, as was that irresistible comedian, Joe Nightingale, before he set London laughing at him in "Hobson's Choice," or performing in the open air at the seaside, as was the inimitable W. H. Berry when the late George Edwardes found him; the next day he may be established as a star in a West-end theatre.

Every young actor and actress dreams of the day when the chance to do something really big, to achieve fame and a big salary, may come along, and here are some stories by famous managers concerning the parts they have played in creating such chances for unknown people to become known.

SIR GEORGE ALEXANDER.

Fifteen or sixteen years ago, when I happened to be playing at Leeds, a young Yorkshireman, then celebrated as an amateur actor in local circles, asked and was given permission to walk on in my company. He had very little to do, of course, but what he did have he did excellently, and this fact, coupled with his magnificent physical appearance, prompted me to do something I have very seldom done. I recommended a stage career for the young man, when his father wrote and asked my advice.

I lost sight of my splendidly-built, promising Yorkshire amateur for some time. Not that I was looking for him, however. What I was looking for about this period was someone who could play Paolo in "Paolo and Francesca," and so leave me free to play the part of the elder brother Giovanni. Partly in the hope of finding what I wanted, I one day went to see F. R.—now Sir Frank—Benson's company in "The Merchant of Venice." One of the players struck me most favourably, and after the performance I went to see Benson with a view to offering this actor an engagement as Paolo. Judge of my surprise when I discovered that it was the young man who had walked on with me at Leeds, and for whom I had advised a stage career.

His name? Henry Ainley. His career since then is well known, and now he is fighting for his country.

MR. HENRY AINLEY.
DISCOVERED BY SIR GEO. ALEXANDER.
Photo Bertram Park

MR. ROBERT EVETT,

who now controls the George Edwardes Enterprises.

I consider that Miss José Collins is the luckiest and most unexpected find I have made so far.

I first saw her when she was about sixteen and was "on" at the old Tivoli. Mr. Edwardes heard there was a girl singing a Spanish song there, and he asked me to go and watch her turn. I liked what she did sufficiently well to report favourably on her, and the result was that she was engaged for a very small part in "The Merry Widow" at Daly's. She was given one little song to sing, but it was not a great success, and it was cut out after a little while.

When she left Daly's, José Collins, who is the daughter of the late Lottie Collins, of "Tar-ra-ra-boom-de-ay" fame, by the way, went to America, and it was not until I went there about two years ago, partly to play myself, and partly to look out for possible stars, that I came across her again. To my mind, she had come on wonderfully, and although two very well-known English managers could not "see" her becoming a success in London, I was convinced that she would "make good" over here, and I backed my judgment by engaging her for Daly's.

I think what she has done in "The Happy Day" proves that my estimate of Miss Collins's abilities was a correct one. Personally I think she is the greatest find in musical comedy since Lily Elsie was discovered.

MISS JOSÉ COLLINS.
DISCOVERED BY MR. ROBERT EVETT.
Photo. Foulsham & Banfield.

MR ALBERT DE COURVILLE.

About four years ago I went to America to look for likely artistes for the Hippodrome and other theatres. Another London manager, also in search of stars, reached New York a few days ahead of me. Almost as soon as we got to the Knickerbocker Hotel, in New York, people began asking, "Have you seen Shirley Kellogg at the Winter Garden?"

So many people asked this question that at last I not only felt a sort of resentment against this Shirley Kellogg, of whom I had not previously heard, but also, I am afraid, I became rather impatient.

"No, I have not, and I don't want to," I said, at last. "I haven't come here to look for American comedians, but for women 'stars,' who can really do something."

"Well, then, you'd better go right along and see Shirley Kellogg," I was told, amidst laughter.

But I was obstinate. Perhaps I was annoyed because I had pictured Shirley Kellogg as a man; perhaps the way in which everyone was talking about her put me off. Anyhow, it was not until I had been in New York three days that I consented to go to the Winter Garden to see her. What I saw swept away all my preconceived ideas, and before long I was insisting that the agent who accompanied me should book this artiste for me. Never in my life has anyone so quickly impressed me as she did. Well, the upshot was that I arranged to meet her at noon the

MISS SHIRLEY KELLOGG.
Photo. Wrather & Buys.

DISCOVERED BY MR. ALBERT DE COURVILLE.

next day to discuss a contract for London. And now here comes the real point of the whole story.

The manager who had travelled over ahead of me had also fixed up to meet Miss Kellogg that morning about coming to London; he was to meet her at eleven o'clock at another agent's office.

Unfortunately for him, and fortunately for me, he was late, and after waiting for him for ten minutes Miss Kellogg became impatient, said she would have no business dealings with a man who could not keep appointments, and came on to see me. Luckily I was waiting for her, and the result was that she signed the contract to come over here which I had no hesitation in offering her.

But this is by no means the end of the story. When I got back to London I heard mysterious rumours that Miss Kellogg had changed her mind and did not intend to stick to our bargain. So I got busy on the cable. I sent off several cablegrams, but no reply came, and at last, in desperation, I got someone who was going over to the States to take an urgent message asking if everything was all right, and explaining about my cablegrams.

In due course came the message: "Yes, intend to hold to contract," and later came Miss Kellogg herself. But once again a hitch arose; she had such a bad attack of home-sickness that she actually booked a return passage on the *Mauretania* three days before the play in which she was to open here—"The Blue House"—was produced at the London Hippodrome. The stage-door keeper had orders to send on all her letters, and it was only by means of the most frantic and impassioned pleading that I at last persuaded her to change her mind and stop in England.

During the run of "The Blue House," I purposely kept out of Miss Kellogg's way—I didn't speak a dozen words to her, and was terrified lest she should repeat her determination to go back home by the next boat. But gradually she began to settle down, and as the days went by—well, everyone knows the rest by this time.

MR. CHARLES B. COCHRAN.

My luckiest find was Alice Delysia, whom I regard as the ideal revue actress.

Some time before the war I happened to be in Paris on business, and one evening I went to Olympia with a theatrical agent. At that time I had little or no intention of looking for artistes—I had no theatre, no plays, no definite theatrical plans—and

MISS ALICE DELYSIA.
DISCOVERED BY MR CHARLES B. COCHRAN.
Photo. Wrather & Buys.

Delysia was not even a name to me. It is true that she was "billed big," chiefly for her artistry in Greek and other classical posing, but I did not know this when I went to Olympia that evening, nor did that part of the performance particularly interest me.

Earlier in the evening, however, she had two or three lines to speak. It was burlesque, and there was no special merit about the lines, but somehow she seemed to get passion into them. I turned to the agent with me.

"Who is that girl?" I asked.

"Oh, no one—La Belle Delysia, she is called. Don't bother about her," he said. "She's engaged for her figure."

"Well, never mind, introduce me," I demanded. It was my business to look out for talent and there was something about "La Belle Delysia" that struck me. Probably it was that elusive quality we call personality; ninety-nine other girls might have spoken Delysia's lines without arresting my interest and attention in the least.

With no great show of enthusiasm the agent did as I asked. Conversation with the girl convinced me that I was right about her possibilities as an actress of genuine emotion, and although, as I say, I had no real plans about placing her anywhere, I persuaded her to come to supper with the agent and myself.

In the restaurant we went to the band played "You Made Me Love You." Delysia quietly but very distinctly sang the words of the song.

"Mam'selle," I said, admiringly, "you have a charming voice!"

She laughed.

"Nonsense, m'sieu! I have no voice at all. Never have I sung on the stage."

"But you will—in London," I told her determinedly.

And so it happened. Alice Delysia was the first actress I engaged when I took the Ambassadors' Theatre and began to give London the small revue, which I believe will outlive all its rivals in this sort of entertainment, and London owes most of it to chance that Delysia came here from Paris to charm and amuse it for, I hope, a long time yet.

MR. GEORGE GROSSMITH.

Two of my greatest—and certainly most unexpected—finds in stars were made on the same day, rather less than

MISS MOYA MANNERING.
Photo. Dover St. Studios.

MR. LESLIE HENSON.
DISCOVERED BY MR. GEORGE GROSSMITH.
Photo Elliott & Fry

two years ago. On this particular lucky day both Miss Moya Mannering and Mr. Leslie Henson came to the Gaiety and offered themselves for anything that was going —"two-line" parts, or even chorus.

Both of them were quite unknown to me, but in engaging them I was indeed fortunate. Miss Mannering had been rehearsing a few lines only for a week or two when we selected her for the important part of Victoria, in "To-night's the Night," and very soon afterwards, when we wanted someone to play Miss Laurette Taylor's part in "Peg o' My Heart," there was no hesitation in entrusting it to Moya Mannering. Her ability was so exceptional that in under a year she was carrying a West-end play on her shoulders.

Her rise is only equalled by that of Leslie Henson. He got the small part of a waiter in "To-night's the Night," and he made so much of his chance that the part grew until at last it became one of the leading ones in the piece.

I regard Leslie Henson now as being one of the finest comedians of the light-comedy stage, and the legitimate successor of Teddy Payne. His brilliant success in "Theodore and Co.," the present Gaiety piece, has now firmly established him as one of the stage's leading laughter-makers.

DISCOVERED BY MR. GEORGE GROSSMITH.

MR. ARTHUR COLLINS.

About ten years ago, when I produced "Cinderella" as the Christmas pantomime at Drury Lane, a pretty American girl called at the theatre one day, and asked for something to do in the chorus. Our great need at the moment being a principal girl, and the chorus being full up, the pretty American girl was politely informed that there was nothing to offer her, and so she departed.

Some little time later I was out at a dinner party, and I was introduced to a certain Miss May de Sousa, an artiste not at all known here, but having a very good reputation in the States. At once the idea struck me—here is the principal girl I am looking for. I asked Miss de Sousa to come and see me at the theatre on the morrow, and I opened our interview there by saying:—

"How would you like to come and play in the pantomime here?"

May de Sousa's eyes twinkled. "But you won't have me."

"Won't have you?" I said. "What makes you say that?"

"Because you've said so once," she laughed.

And then she told me how, for a joke, she had tried to get into the chorus, and had been turned down.

I consider May de Sousa was the luckiest

and most unexpected find of an artiste I ever made. She was such an enormous success as Cinderella that we raised her salary, of our own initiative, after she had played the part for a fortnight.

And to think how nearly she was missed!

MR. ALFRED BUTT.

When one is always on the look-out for stars in embryo it is inevitable that one should now and then make surprising finds. Consequently, I am faced with the difficulty of having too many, rather than too few, cases to choose from.

However, looking back, I do not think I ever came across a greater example of unexpected talent in a certain direction than I did when I found poor Basil Hallam. He was one of the last young actors whom I should have thought of for the part of Gilbert the Filbert in the original "Passing Show" at the Palace Theatre. The story of how he came—or, rather, was brought—to me and got his chance is interesting.

He had been out in America playing in "The Blindness of Virtue," and there he met Elsie Janis. It will be remembered that I engaged Miss Janis to come over here to create the part of Kitty O'Hara in "The Passing Show," and it so happened that Basil Hallam was passing the Carlton Hotel on the day and at the very moment when Miss Janis's luggage was being taken into the hotel. By a lucky chance he happened to notice the luggage, saw Miss Janis's name on some of it, and, on the spur of the moment, went into the hotel to greet and pay his respects to her and her mother.

In the course of conversation Miss Janis asked him what he was doing just then, and with a smile he said he was "resting."

"Oh," she said; "well, how would you like to be in a revue?"

Basil Hallam, who knew next to nothing of revues—they were comparatively rare in those days—answered that he "didn't think he'd be much good at singing or dancing and that sort of thing," but Elsie Janis overruled these objections and brought him along to see me. I dimly remembered having seen him in a small part in a comedy in London, but although I had really very little faith in him for the part of Gilbert the Filbert (then intended to be quite small) something prompted me to let him show what he could do at rehearsals.

At first he did not promise to be very successful, but one day he let himself go and astonished and amused everyone by his performance at rehearsal. The sudden change was so remarkable and so rich in promise that I at once confirmed his engagement, and, bit by bit, the small part of Gilbert the Filbert was built up to one of the chief ones in the revue.

As a matter of fact, Basil Hallam created in Gilbert the Filbert a part that has become almost immortal, and by means of the lucky chain of circumstances I have here related made for himself an assured position in light plays, a position he would undoubtedly have resumed after the war but for the tragic mischance which cut short the life he so gallantly volunteered in his country's great cause.

MR. SEYMOUR HICKS.

I have been fortunate enough to make a number of unexpected and genuine finds

MISS MAY DE SOUSA.
DISCOVERED BY MR. ARTHUR COLLINS.
Photo. Bassano.

THE LATE MR. BASIL HALLAM. DISCOVERED BY MR. ALFRED BUTT.
Photo Foulsham & Banfield.

in "stars in the rough" as a manager, but quite the most wonderful find of all happened long before my managerial days. One day, a good many years ago now, I was standing in the circle of the Court Theatre, Sloane Square, waiting to see Arthur Chudleigh about an engagement in Sims and Raleigh's well-known "Guardsman." While I was waiting, through a door on the stage came the loveliest girl I have ever seen. She wore a green velvet cloak over her evening gown, and as she made her exit she seemed to look straight at me. In my eyes the girl was fairy-like, so dainty and beautiful was she.

So impressed was I that when Arthur Chudleigh joined me I begged him to take me round at once and introduce me. But he only laughed and started to talk business, and when I returned to the subject of the lovely girl he told me plainly, "If I did I should have her father after me; he comes for her every evening and permits no hangers-on or admirers."

This was a distinct blow, but love laughs at obstacles (I suppose it *was* a case of love at first sight with me!), and when Chudleigh offered me an engagement I took it on the spot. I'd have taken a two-line part—anything—so long as it would lead to my meeting that girl.

Well, the next morning I rushed off to my first rehearsal fully half an hour before I need have done, and my energy and anxiety were rewarded in the end. True, my beautiful girl was not there when I arrived,

MISS ELLALINE TERRISS DISCOVERED BY MR. SEYMOUR HICKS.
Photo Foulsham & Banfield.

but when she did come Chudleigh, with a merry twinkle in his eye, did for me what he had refused to do the previous evening. He took me up to her and said, "Ella, may I introduce a great friend of mine, young Hicks?"

This, then, was how I first met my greatest "star"—and my wife; "Ella" and "young Hicks" got on so well together that it was not long before, at a registry office in Brentford, Miss Ellaline Terriss became Mrs. Seymour Hicks.

It was a very lucky and very wonderful "find" for me!

DO NOT MISS THIS GREAT SERIAL. IT IS ONE OF THE MOST AMUSING STORIES YOU EVER READ—FULL OF HUMOUR AND HUMAN NATURE—A STORY OF CONSTANT CHUCKLES.

UNEASY MONEY.

By

P. G. WODEHOUSE.

Illustrated by Clarence F. Underwood.

I.

N a day in June, at the hour when London moves abroad in quest of lunch, a young man stood at the entrance of the Bandolero Restaurant looking earnestly up Shaftesbury Avenue—a large young man in excellent condition, with a pleasant, good-humoured, brown, clean-cut face. He paid no attention to the stream of humanity that flowed past him. His mouth was set and his eyes wore a serious, almost a wistful expression. He was frowning slightly. One would have said that here was a man with a secret sorrow.

William FitzWilliam Delamere Chalmers, Lord Dawlish, had no secret sorrow. All that he was thinking of at that moment was the best method of laying a golf ball dead in front of the Palace Theatre. It was his habit to pass the time in mental golf when Claire Fenwick was late in keeping her appointments with him. On one occasion she had kept him waiting so long that he had been able to do nine holes, starting at the Savoy Grill and finishing up near Hammersmith. His was a simple mind, able to amuse itself with simple things.

As he stood there, gazing into the middle distance, an individual of dishevelled aspect sidled up, a vagrant of almost the maximum seediness, from whose midriff there protruded a trayful of a strange welter of collar-studs, shoe-laces, rubber rings, buttonhooks, and dying roosters. For some minutes he had been eyeing his lordship appraisingly from the edge of the kerb, and now, secure in the fact that there seemed to be no policeman in the immediate vicinity, he anchored himself in front of him and observed that he had a wife and four children at home, all starving.

This sort of thing was always happening to Lord Dawlish. There was something about him, some atmosphere of unaffected kindliness, that invited it.

In these days when everything, from the shape of a man's hat to his method of dealing with asparagus, is supposed to be an index to character, it is possible to form some estimate of Lord Dawlish from the fact that his vigil in front of the Bandolero had been expensive even before the advent of the Benedict with the studs and laces. In London, as in New York, there are spots where it is unsafe for a man of yielding disposition to stand still, and the corner of Shaftesbury Avenue and Piccadilly Circus is one of them. Scrubby, impecunious men drift to and fro there, waiting for the gods to provide something easy; and the prudent man, conscious of the possession of loose change, whizzes through the danger zone at his best speed, "like one that on a lonesome road doth walk in fear and dread, and having once turned round walks on, and turns no more his head, because he knows a frightful fiend doth close behind him tread." In the seven minutes he had been waiting two frightful fiends closed in on Lord Dawlish, requesting loans of five shillings till Wednesday week and Saturday week respectively, and he had parted with the money without a murmur.

A further clue to his character is supplied by the fact that both these needy persons seemed to know him intimately, and that each called him Bill. All Lord Dawlish's friends called him Bill, and he had a catholic list of them, ranging from men whose names were in "Debrett" to men whose names were on the notice boards of obscure clubs in connection with the non-payment of dues. He was the sort of man one instinctively calls Bill.

The anti-race-suicide enthusiast with the rubber rings did not call Lord Dawlish Bill, but otherwise his manner was intimate. His lordship's gaze being a little slow in returning from the middle distance—for it was not a matter to be decided carelessly and without thought, this problem of carrying the length of Shaftesbury Avenue with a single brassy shot—he repeated the gossip from the home. Lord Dawlish regarded him thoughtfully.

"It could be done," he said, "but you'd want a bit of pull on it. I'm sorry; I didn't catch what you said."

The other obliged with his remark for the

third time, with increased pathos, for constant repetition was making him almost believe it himself.

"Four starving children?"

"Four, guv'nor, so help me!"

"I suppose you don't get much time for golf, then, what?" said Lord Dawlish, sympathetically.

It was precisely three days, said the man, mournfully inflating a dying rooster, since his offspring had tasted bread.

This did not touch Lord Dawlish deeply. He was not very fond of bread. But it seemed to be troubling the poor fellow with the studs a great deal, so, realizing that tastes differ and that there is no accounting for them, he looked at him commiseratingly.

"Of course, if they like bread, that makes it rather rotten, doesn't it? What are you going to do about it?"

The man permitted the dying rooster to die noisily.

"Buy a dying rooster, guv'nor," he advised. "Causes great fun and laughter."

Lord Dawlish eyed the strange fowl without enthusiasm.

"No," he said, with a slight shudder.

There was a pause. The situation had the appearance of being at a deadlock.

"I'll tell you what," said Lord Dawlish, with the air of one who, having pondered, has been rewarded with a great idea: "the fact is, I really don't want to buy anything. You seem by bad luck to be stocked up with just the sort of things I wouldn't be seen dead in a ditch with. I can't stand rubber rings, never could. I'm not really keen on buttonhooks. And I don't want to hurt your feelings, but I think that squeaking bird of yours is about the beastliest thing I ever met. So suppose I give you a shilling and call it square, what?"

"Gawd bless yer, guv'nor."

"Not at all. You'll be able to get those children of yours some bread—I expect you can get a lot of bread for a shilling. Do they really like it? Rum kids!"

And having concluded this delicate financial deal Lord Dawlish turned, the movement bringing him face to face with a tall girl in white.

During the business talk which had just come to an end this girl had been making her way up the side street which forms a short cut between Coventry Street and the Bandolero, and several admirers of feminine beauty who happened to be using the same route had almost dislocated their necks looking after her. She was a strikingly handsome girl. She was tall and willowy. Her eyes, shaded by her hat, were large and grey. Her nose was small and straight, her mouth, though somewhat hard, admirably shaped, and she carried herself magnificently. One cannot blame the policeman on duty in Leicester Square for remarking to a cabman as she passed that he envied the bloke that that was going to meet.

Bill Dawlish was this fortunate bloke, but, from the look of him as he caught sight of her, one would have said that he did not appreciate his luck. The fact of the matter was that he had only just finished giving the father of the family his shilling, and he was afraid that Claire had seen him doing it. For Claire, dear girl, was apt to be unreasonable about these little generosities of his. He cast a furtive glance behind him in the hope that the disseminator of expiring roosters had vanished, but the man was still at his elbow. Worse, he faced them, and in a hoarse but carrying voice he was instructing Heaven to bless his benefactor.

"Hallca, Claire darling!" said Lord Dawlish, with a sort of sheepish breeziness. "Here you are."

Claire was looking after the stud merchant, as, grasping his wealth, he scuttled up the avenue.

"Were you giving that man money, Bill?"

"Only a bob," his lordship hastened to say. "Rather a sad case, don't you know. Squads of children at home demanding bread. Didn't want much else, apparently, but were frightfully keen on bread."

"He has just gone into a public-house."

"He may have gone to telephone or something, what?"

"I wish," said Claire, fretfully, leading the way down the grillroom stairs, "that you wouldn't let all London sponge on you like this. I keep telling you not to. I should have thought that if anyone needed to keep what little money he has got it was you."

Certainly Lord Dawlish would have been more prudent not to have parted with even eleven shillings, for he was not a rich man. Indeed, with the single exception of the Earl of Wetherby, whose finances were so irregular that he could not be said to possess an income at all, he was the poorest man of his rank in the British Isles.

It was in the days of the Regency that the Dawlish coffers first began to show signs of cracking under the strain, in the era of the then celebrated Beau Dawlish. Nor were his successors backward in the spending art. A breezy disregard for the preservation of the pence was a family trait. Bill was at Cambridge when his predecessor in the title, his Uncle Philip, was performing the concluding exercises of the dissipation of the Dawlish doubloons, a feat which he achieved so neatly that when he died there was just enough cash to pay the doctors, and no more. Bill found himself the possessor of that most ironical thing, a moneyless title. He was then twenty-three.

Until six months before, when he had become engaged to Claire Fenwick, he had found nothing to quarrel with in his lot. He was not the type to waste time in vain regrets. His tastes were simple. As long as he could afford to belong to one or two golf clubs and have something over for those small loans which, in certain of the numerous circles in which he moved, were the inevitable concomitant of popularity, he was satisfied. And this modest ambition had been realized for him by a group of what he was accustomed to refer to as decent old bucks, who had installed him as secretary of that aristocratic and exclusive club, Brown's in St. James Street,

at an annual salary of four hundred pounds. With that wealth, added to free lodging at one of the best clubs in London, perfect health, a steadily-diminishing golf handicap, and a host of friends in every walk of life, Bill had felt that it would be absurd not to be happy and contented.

But Claire had made a difference. There was no question of that. In the first place, she resolutely declined to marry him on four hundred pounds a year. She scoffed at four hundred pounds a year. To hear her talk, you would have supposed that she had been brought up from the cradle to look on four hundred pounds a year as small change to be disposed of in tips and cab fares. That in itself would have been enough to sow doubts in Bill's mind as to whether he had really got all the money that a reasonable man needed; and Claire saw to it that these doubts sprouted, by confining her conversation on the occasions of their meeting almost entirely to the great theme of money, with its minor sub-divisions of How to get it, Why don't you get it? and I'm sick and tired of not having it.

She developed this theme to-day, not only on the stairs leading to the grillroom, but even after they had seated themselves at their table. It was a relief to Bill when the arrival of the waiter with food caused a break in the conversation and enabled him adroitly to change the subject.

"What have you been doing this morning?" he asked.

"I went to see Maginnis at the theatre."

"Oh!"

"I had a wire from him asking me to call. They want me to take up Claudia Winslow's part in the number one company."

"That's good."

"Why?"

"Well—er—what I mean—well, isn't it? What I mean is, leading part, and so forth."

"In a touring company?"

"Yes, I see what you mean," said Lord Dawlish, who didn't at all. He thought rather highly of the number one companies that hailed from the theatre of which Mr. Maginnis was proprietor.

"And anyhow, I ought to have had the part in the first place instead of when the tour's half over. They are at Southampton this week. He wants me to join them there and go on to Portsmouth with them."

"You'll like Portsmouth."

"Why?"

"Well—er—good links quite near."

"You know I don't play golf."

"Nor do you. I was forgetting. Still, it's quite a jolly place."

"It's a horrible place. I loathe it. I've half a mind not to go."

"Oh, I don't know."

"What do you mean?"

Lord Dawlish was feeling a little sorry for himself. Whatever he said seemed to be the wrong thing. This evidently was one of the days on which Claire was not so sweet-tempered as on some other days. It crossed his mind that of late these irritable moods of hers had grown more frequent. It was not her fault, poor girl! he told himself. She had rather a rotten time.

It was always Lord Dawlish's habit on these occasions to make this excuse for Claire. It was such a satisfactory excuse. It covered everything. But, as a matter of fact, the rather rotten time which she was having was not such a very rotten one. Reducing it to its simplest terms, and forgetting for the moment that she was an extraordinarily beautiful girl—which his lordship found it impossible to do—all that it amounted to was that, her mother having but a small income, and existence in the West Kensington flat being consequently a trifle dull for one with a taste for the luxuries of life, Claire had gone on the stage. By birth she belonged to a class of which the female members are seldom called upon to earn money at all, and that was one count of her grievance against Fate. Another was that she had not done as well on the stage as she had expected to do. When she became engaged to Bill she had reached a point where she could obtain without difficulty good parts in the touring companies of London successes, but beyond that it seemed it was impossible for her to soar. It was not, perhaps, a very exhilarating life, but, except to the eyes of love, there was nothing tragic about it. It was the cumulative effect of having a mother in reduced circumstances and grumbling about it, of being compelled to work and grumbling about that, and of achieving in her work only a semi-success and grumbling about that also, that—backed by her looks—enabled Claire to give quite a number of people, and Bill Dawlish in particular, the impression that she was a modern martyr, only sustained by her indomitable courage.

So Bill, being requested in a peevish voice to explain what he meant by saying, "Oh, I don't know," condoned the peevishness. He then bent his mind to the task of trying to ascertain what he had meant.

"Well," he said, "what I mean is, if you don't show up won't it be rather a jar for old friend Maginnis? Won't he be apt to foam at the mouth a bit and stop giving you parts in his companies?"

"I'm sick of trying to please Maginnis. What's the good? He never gives me a chance in London. I'm sick of being always on tour. I'm sick of everything."

"It's the heat," said Lord Dawlish, most injudiciously.

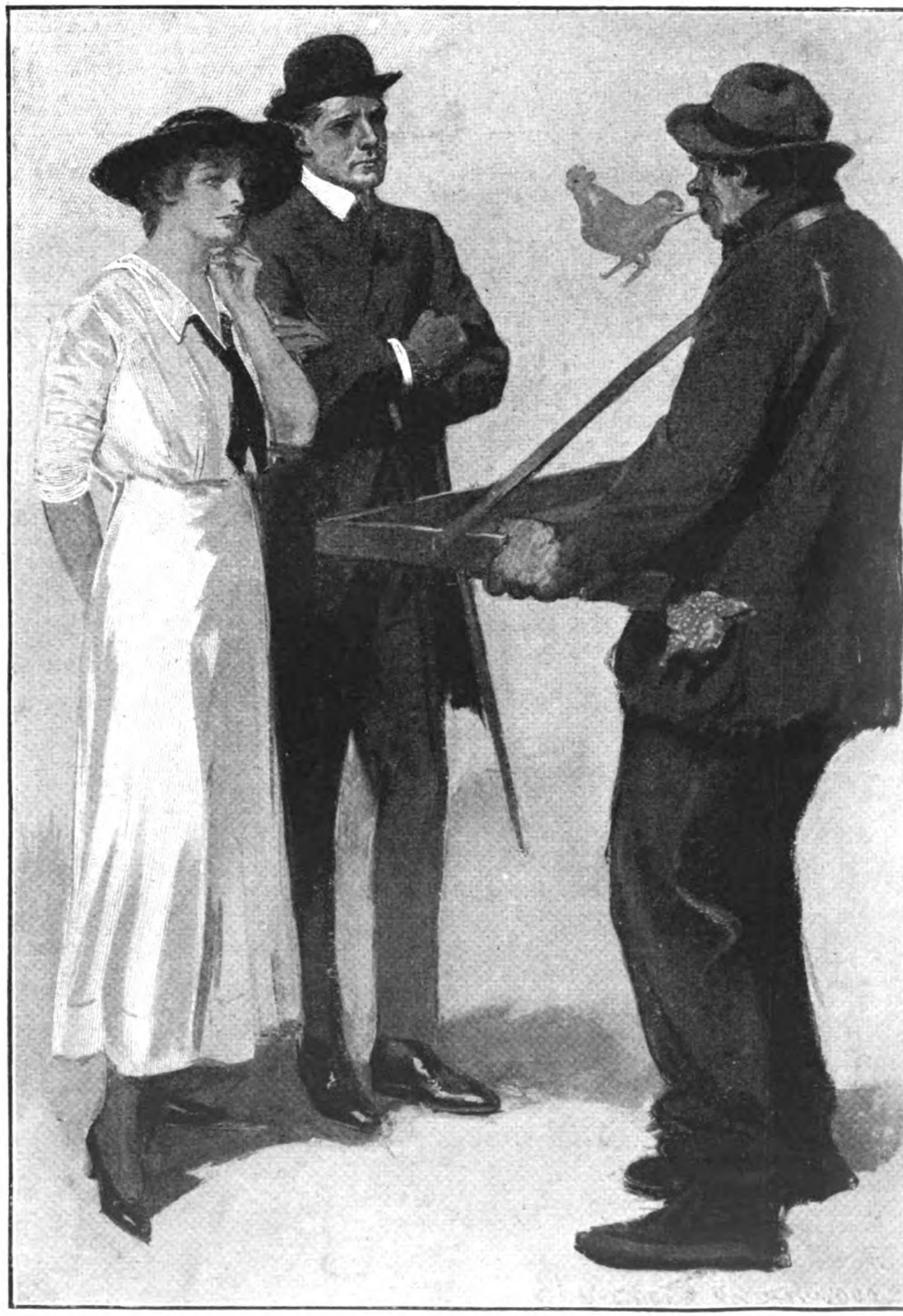
"It isn't the heat. It's you!"

"Me? What have I done?"

"It's what you've not done. Why can't you exert yourself and make some money?"

Lord Dawlish groaned a silent groan. By a devious route, but with unfailing precision, they had come homing back to the same old subject.

"We have been engaged for six months, and there seems about as much chance of our ever getting married as of—I can't think of anything



"THE DISSEMINATOR OF EXPIRING ROOSTERS FACED THEM, AND WAS INSTRUCTING HEAVEN TO BLESS HIS BENEFACTOR."

unlikely enough. We shall go on like this till we're dead."

"But, my dear girl!"

"I wish you wouldn't talk to me as if you were my grandfather. What were you going to say?"

"Only that we can get married this afternoon if you'll say the word."

"Oh, don't let us go into all that again! I'm not going to marry on four hundred a year and spend the rest of my life in a poky little flat on the edge of London. Why can't you make more money?"

"I did have a dash at it, you know. I waylaid old Bodger—Colonel Bodger, on the committee of the club, you know—and suggested over a whisky-and-soda that the management of Brown's would be behaving like sportsmen if they bumped my salary up a bit, and the old boy nearly strangled himself trying to suck down Scotch and laugh at the same time. I give you my word, he nearly expired on the smoking-room floor. When he came to he said that he wished I wouldn't spring my good things on him so suddenly, as he had a weak heart. He said they were only paying me my present salary because they liked me so much. You know, it was decent of the old boy to say that."

"What is the good of being liked by the men in your club if you won't make any use of it?"

"How do you mean?"

"There are endless things you could do. You could have got Mr. Breitstein elected at Brown's if you had liked. They wouldn't have dreamed of blackballing anyone proposed by a popular man like you, and Mr. Breitstein asked you personally to use your influence—you told me so."

"But, my dear girl—I mean my darling—Breitstein! He's the limit! He's the worst bounder in London."

"He's also one of the richest men in London. He would have done anything for you. And you let him go! You insulted him!"

"Insulted him?"

"Didn't you send him an admission ticket to the Zoo?"

"Oh, well, yes, I did do that. He thanked me and went the following Sunday. Amazing how these rich Johnnies love getting something for nothing. There was that old American I met down at Marvis Bay last year——"

"You threw away a wonderful chance of making all sorts of money. Why, a single tip from Mr. Breitstein would have made your fortune."

"But, Claire, you know, there are some things—what I mean is, if they like me at Brown's, it's awfully decent of them and all that, but I couldn't take advantage of it to plant a fellow like Breitstein on them. It wouldn't be playing the game."

"Oh, nonsense!"

Lord Dawlish looked unhappy, but said nothing. This matter of Mr. Breitstein had been touched upon by Claire in previous conversations, and it was a subject for which he had little liking. Experience had taught him that none of the arguments which seemed so conclusive to him—to wit, that the financier had on two occasions only just escaped imprisonment for fraud, and, what was worse, made a noise when he drank soup, like water running out of a bathtub—had the least effect upon her. The only thing to do when Mr. Breitstein came up in the course of chitchat over the festive board was to stay quiet until he blew over.

"That old American you met at Marvis Bay," said Claire, her memory flitting back to the remark which she had interrupted; "well, there's another case. You could easily have got him to do something for you."

"Claire, really!" said his goaded lordship, protestingly. "How on earth? I only met the man on the links."

"But you were very nice to him. You told me yourself that you spent hours helping him to get rid of his slice, whatever that is."

"We happened to be the only two down there at the time, so I was as civil as I could manage. If you're marooned at a Cornish seaside resort out of the season with a man, you can't spend your time dodging him. And this man had a slice that fascinated me. I felt at the time that it was my mission in life to cure him, so I had a dash at it. But I don't see how on the strength of that I could expect the old boy to adopt me. He probably forgot my existence after I had left."

"You said you met him in London a month or two afterwards, and he hadn't forgotten you."

"Well, yes, that's true. He was walking up the Haymarket and I was walking down. I caught his eye, and he nodded and passed on. I don't see how I could construe that into an invitation to go and sit on his lap and help myself out of his pockets."

"You couldn't expect him to go out of his way to help you; but probably if you had gone to him he would have done something."

"You haven't the pleasure of Mr. Ira Nutcombe's acquaintance, Claire, or you wouldn't talk like that. He wasn't the sort of man you could get things out of. He didn't even tip the caddie. Besides, can't you see what I mean? I couldn't trade on a chance acquaintance of the golf links to——"

"That is just what I complain of in you. You're too diffident."

"It isn't diffidence exactly. Talking of old Nutcombe, I was speaking to Gates again the other night. He was telling me about America. There's a lot of money to be made over there, you know, and the committee owes me a holiday. They would give me a few weeks off any time I liked.

"What do you say? Shall I pop over and have a look round? I might happen to drop into something. Gates was telling me about fellows he knew who had dropped into things in New York."

"What's the good of putting yourself to all the trouble and expense of going to America?

You can easily make all you want in London if you will only try. It isn't as if you had no chances. You have more chances than almost any man in town. With your title you could get all the directorships in the City that you wanted."

"Well, the fact is, this business of taking directorships has never quite appealed to me. I don't know anything about the game, and I should probably run up against some wildcat company. I can't say I like the directorship wheeze much. It's the idea of knowing that one's name would be being used as a bait. Every time I saw it on a prospectus I should feel like a trout fly."

Claire bit her lip.

"It's so exasperating!" she broke out. "When I first told my friends that I was engaged to Lord Dawlish they were tremendously impressed. They took it for granted that you must have lots of money. Now I have to keep explaining to them that the reason we don't get married is that we can't afford to. I'm almost as badly off as poor Polly Davis who was in the Heavenly Waltz Company with me when she married that man, Lord Wetherby. A man with a title has no right not to have money. It makes the whole thing farcical.

"If I were in your place I should have tried a hundred things by now, but you always have some silly objection. Why couldn't you, for instance, have taken on the agency of that what-d'you-call-it car?"

"What I called it would have been nothing to what the poor devils who bought it would have called it."

"You could have sold hundreds of them, and the company would have given you any commission you asked. You know just the sort of people they wanted to get in touch with."

"But, darling, how could I? Planting Breitstein on the club would have been nothing compared with sowing these horrors about London. I couldn't go about the place sticking my pals with a car which, I give you my honest word, was stuck together with chewing-gum and tied up with string."

"Why not? It would be their fault if they bought a car that wasn't any good. Why should you have to worry once you had it sold?"

It was not Lord Dawlish's lucky afternoon. All through lunch he had been saying the wrong thing, and now he put the coping-stone on his misdeeds. Of all the ways in which he could have answered Claire's question he chose the worst.

"Er—well," he said, "*noblesse oblige*, don't you know, what?"

For a moment Claire did not speak. Then she looked at her watch and got up.

"I must be going," she said, coldly.

"But you haven't had your coffee yet."

"I don't want any coffee."

"What's the matter, dear?"

"Nothing is the matter. I have to go home and pack. I'm going to Southampton this afternoon."

She began to move toward the door. Lord Dawlish, anxious to follow, was detained by the fact that he had not yet paid the bill. The production and settling of this took time, and when finally he turned in search of Claire she was nowhere visible.

Bounding upstairs on the swift feet of love, he reached the street. She had gone.

II.

A GREY sadness surged over Bill Dawlish. The sun hid itself behind a cloud, the sky took on a leaden hue, and a chill wind blew through the world. He scanned Shaftesbury Avenue with a jaundiced eye, and thought that he had never seen a beastlier or more depressing thoroughfare. Piccadilly, however, into which he shortly dragged himself, was even worse. It was full of men and women and other depressing things.

He pitied himself profoundly. It was a rotten world to live in, this, where a fellow couldn't say *noblesse oblige* without upsetting the universe. Why shouldn't a fellow say *noblesse oblige?* Why——? At this juncture Lord Dawlish walked into a lamp-post.

The shock changed his mood. Gloom still obsessed him, but blended now with remorse. He began to look at the matter from Claire's viewpoint, and his pity switched from himself to her. In the first place, the poor girl had rather a rotten time. Could she be blamed for wanting him to make money? No. Yet whenever she made suggestions as to how the thing was to be done, he snubbed her by saying *noblesse oblige*. Naturally a refined and sensitive young girl objected to having things like *noblesse oblige* said to her. Where was the sense in saying *noblesse oblige?* Such a confoundedly silly thing to say. Only a perfect ass would spend his time rushing about the place saying *noblesse oblige* to people.

"By Jove!" Lord Dawlish stopped in his stride. He disentangled himself from a pedestrian who had rammed him on the back. "I'll do it!"

He hailed a passing taxi and directed the driver to make for the Pen and Ink Club.

The decision at which Bill had arrived with such dramatic suddenness in the middle of Piccadilly was the same at which some centuries earlier Columbus had arrived in the privacy of his home.

"Hang it!" said Bill to himself in the cab, "I'll go to America!". The exact words probably which Columbus had used, talking the thing over with his wife.

Bill's knowledge of the great republic across the sea was at this period of his life a little sketchy. He knew that there had been unpleasantness between England and the United States in seventeen-something and again in eighteen-something, but that things had eventually been straightened out by Miss Edna May and her fellow missionaries of the Belle of New York Company, since which time there had been no more trouble. Of American cocktails he had a fair working knowledge, and he appreciated ragtime. But of the other great American institutions he was completely ignorant.

He was on his way now to see Gates. Gates was a comparatively recent addition to his list of friends, a New York newspaper man who had come to England a few months before to act as his paper's London correspondent. He was generally to be found at the Pen and Ink Club, an institution affiliated with the New York Players, of which he was a member.

Gates was in. He had just finished lunch.

"What's the trouble, Bill?" he inquired, when he had deposited his lordship in a corner of the reading-room, which he had selected because silence was compulsory there, thus rendering it possible for two men to hear each other speak. "What brings you charging in here looking like the Soul's Awakening?"

"I've had an idea, old man."

"Proceed. Continue."

"Oh! Well, you remember what you were saying about America?"

"What was I saying about America?"

"The other day, don't you remember? What a lot of money there was to be made there and so forth."

"Well?"

"I'm going there."

"To America?"

"Yes."

"To make money?"

"Rather."

Gates nodded—sadly, it seemed to Bill. He was rather a melancholy young man, with a long face not unlike a pessimistic horse.

"Gosh!" he said.

Bill felt a little damped. By no mental juggling could he construe "Gosh!" into an expression of enthusiastic approbation.

Gates looked at Bill curiously. "What's the idea?" he said. "I could have understood it if you had told me that you were going to New York for pleasure, instructing your man Willoughby to see that the trunks were jolly well packed and wiring to the skipper of your yacht to meet you at Liverpool. But you seem to have sordid motives. You talk about making money. What do you want with more money?"

"Why, I'm devilish hard up."

"Tenantry a bit slack with the rent?" said Gates, sympathetically.

Bill laughed.

"My dear chap, I don't know what on earth you're talking about. How much money do you think I've got? Four hundred pounds a year, and no prospect of ever making more unless I sweat for it."

"What! I always thought you were rolling in money."

"What gave you that idea?"

"You have a prosperous look. It's a funny thing about England. I've known you four months, and I know men who know you; but I've never heard a word about your finances. In New York we all wear labels, stating our incomes and prospects in clear lettering. Well, if it's like that it's different, of course. There certainly is more money to be made in America than here. I don't quite see what you think you're going to do when you get there, but that's up to you.

"There's no harm in giving the city a trial. Anyway, I can give you a letter or two that might help."

"That's awfully good of you."

"You won't mind my alluding to you as my friend William Smith?"

"William Smith?"

"You can't travel under your own name if you are really serious about getting a job. Mind you, if my letters lead to anything it will probably be a situation as an earnest bill-clerk or an effervescent office-boy, for Rockefeller and Carnegie and that lot have swiped all the soft jobs. But if you go over as Lord Dawlish you won't even get that. Lords are popular socially in America, but are not used to any great extent in the office. If you try to break in under your right name you'll get the glad hand and be asked to stay here and there and play a good deal of golf and dance quite a lot, but you won't get a job. A gentle smile will greet all your pleadings that you be allowed to come in and save the firm."

"I see."

"We may look on Smith as a necessity."

"Do you know, I'm not frightfully keen on the name Smith. Wouldn't something else do?"

"Sure. We aim to please. How would Jones suit you?"

"The trouble is, you know, that if I took a name I wasn't used to I might forget it."

"If you've the sort of mind that would forget Jones I doubt if ever you'll be a captain of industry."

"Why not Chalmers?"

"You think it easier to memorize than Jones?"

"It used to be my name, you see, before I got the title."

"I see. All right. Chalmers then. When do you think of starting?"

"To-morrow."

"You aren't losing much time. By the way, as you're going to New York you might as well use my flat."

"It's awfully good of you."

"Not a bit. You would be doing me a favour. I had to leave at a moment's notice, and I want to know what's been happening to the place. I left some Japanese prints there, and my favourite nightmare is that someone has broken in and sneaked them. Write down the address — Forty - blank East Twenty-seventh Street. I'll send you the key to Brown's to-night with those letters."

Bill walked up the Strand, glowing with energy. He made his way to Cockspur Street to buy his ticket for New York. This done, he set out to Brown's to arrange with the committee the details of his departure.

He reached Brown's at twenty minutes past two and left it again at twenty-three minutes past; for, directly he entered, the hall porter had handed him a telephone message. The telephone attendants at London clubs are

masters of suggestive brevity. The one in the basement of Brown's had written on Bill's slip of paper the words: "1 p.m. Will Lord Dawlish as soon as possible call upon Mr. Gerald Nichols at his office?" To this was appended a message consisting of two words: "Good news."

It was stimulating. The probability was that all Jerry Nichols wanted to tell him was that he had received stable information about some horse or had been given a box for the Empire, but for all that it was stimulating.

Bill looked at his watch. He could spare half an hour. He set out at once for the offices of the eminent law firm of Nichols, Nichols, Nichols, and Nichols, of which aggregation of Nicholses his friend Jerry was the last and smallest.

III.

ON a west-bound omnibus Claire Fenwick sat and raged silently in the June sunshine. She was furious. What right had Lord Dawlish to look down his nose and murmur "*Noblesse oblige*" when she asked him a question, as if she had suggested that he should commit some crime? It was the patronizing way he had said it that infuriated her, as if he were a superior being of some kind, governed by codes which she could not be expected to understand. Everybody nowadays did the sort of things she suggested, so what was the good of looking shocked and saying "*Noblesse oblige*"?

The omnibus rolled on towards West Kensington. Claire hated the place with the bitter hate of one who had read society novels, and yearned for Grosvenor Square and butlers and a general atmosphere of soft cushions and pink-shaded lights and maids to do one's hair. She hated the cheap furniture of the little parlour, the penetrating contralto of the cook singing hymns in the kitchen, and the ubiquitousness of her small brother. He was only ten, and small for his age, yet he appeared to have the power of being in two rooms at the same time while making a nerve-racking noise in another.

It was Percy who greeted her to-day as she entered the flat.

"Halloa, Claire! I say, Claire, there's a letter for you. It came by the second post. I say, Claire, it's got an American stamp on it. Can I have it, Claire? I haven't got one in my collection."

His sister regarded him broodingly. "For goodness' sake don't bellow like that!" she said. "Of course, you can have the stamp. I don't want it. Where is the letter?"

Claire took the envelope from him, extracted the letter, and handed back the envelope. Percy vanished into the dining-room with a shattering squeal of pleasure.

A voice spoke from behind a half-opened door:—

"Is that you, Claire?"

"Yes, mother; I've come back to pack. They want me to go to Southampton to-night to take up Claudia Winslow's part."

"What train are you catching?"

"The three-fifteen."

"You will have to hurry."

"I'm going to hurry," said Claire, clenching her fists as two simultaneous bursts of song, in different keys and varying tempos, proceeded from the dining-room and kitchen. A girl has to be in a sunnier mood than she was to bear up without wincing under the infliction of a duet consisting of the Rock of Ages and Waiting for the Robert E. Lee. Assuredly Claire proposed to hurry. She meant to get her packing done in record time and escape from this place. She went into her bedroom and began to throw things untidily into her trunk. She had put the letter in her pocket against a more favourable time for perusal. A glance had told her that it was from her friend Polly, Countess of Wetherby: that Polly Davis of whom she had spoken to Lord Dawlish. Polly Davis, now married for better or for worse to that curious invertebrate person, Algie Wetherby, was the only real friend Claire had made on the stage. A sort of shivering gentility had kept her aloof from the rest of her fellow-workers, but it took more than a shivering gentility to stave off Polly.

Claire had passed through the various stages of intimacy with her, until on the occasion of Polly's marriage she had acted as her bridesmaid.

It was a long letter, too long to be read until she was at leisure, and written in a straggling hand that made reading difficult. She was mildly surprised that Polly should have written her, for she had been back in America a year or more now, and this was her first letter. Polly had a warm heart and did not forget her friends, but she was not a good correspondent.

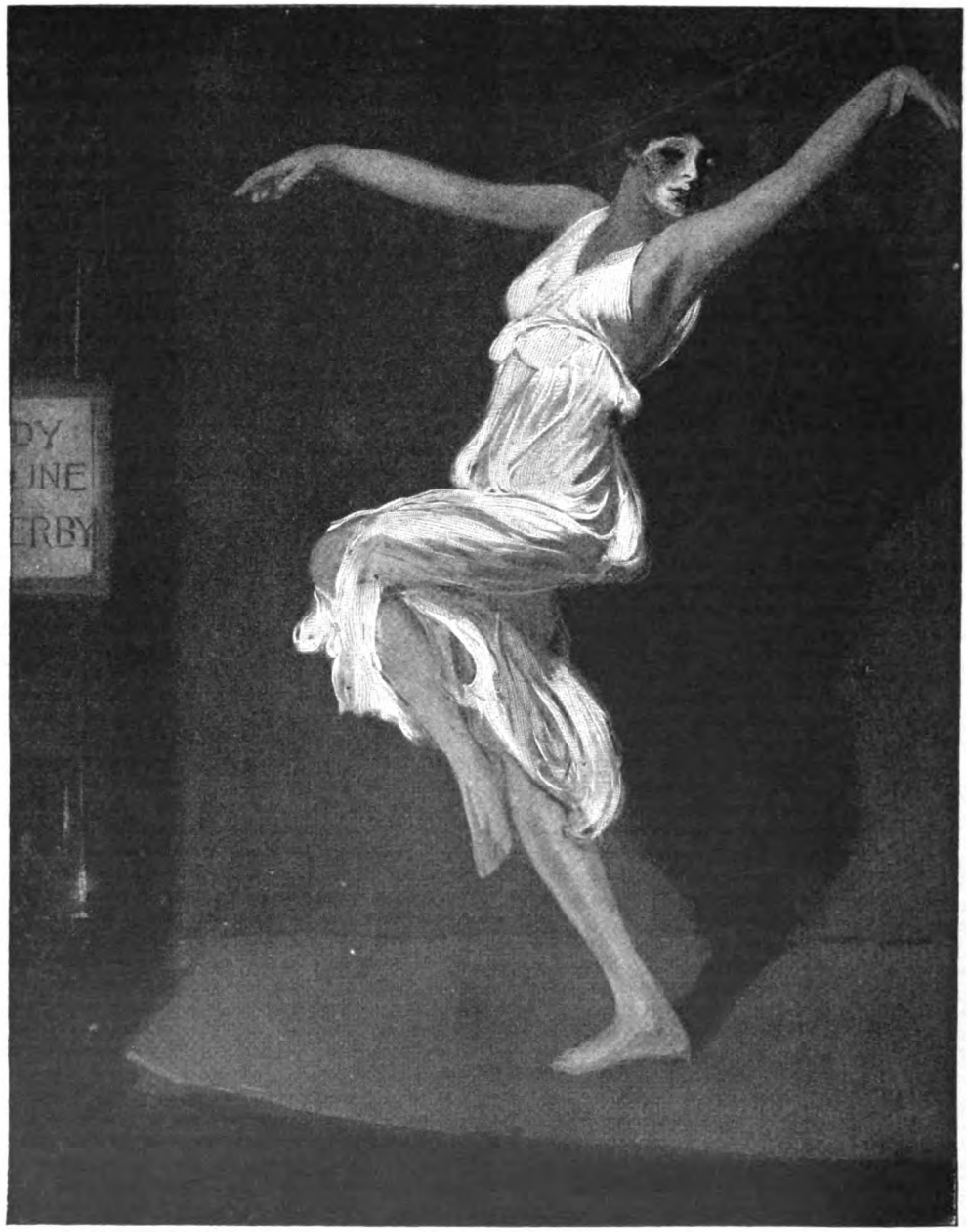
The need of getting her things ready at once drove the letter from Claire's mind. She was in the train on her way to Southampton before she remembered its existence.

It was dated from New York.

"MY DEAR OLD CLAIRE,—Is this really my first letter to you? Isn't that awful! Gee! A lot's happened since I saw you last. I must tell you first about my hit. Some hit! Claire, old girl, I own New York. I daren't tell you what my salary is. You'd faint.

"I'm doing barefoot dancing. You know the sort of stuff. I started it in vaudeville, and went so big that my agent shifted me to the restaurants, and they have to call out the police reserves to handle the crowd. You can't get a table at Reigelheimer's, which is my pitch, unless you tip the head waiter a small fortune and promise to mail him your clothes when you get home. I dance during supper with nothing on my feet and not much anywhere else, and it takes three vans to carry my salary to the bank.

"Of course, it's the title that does it: 'Lady Pauline Wetherby!' Algie says it oughtn't to be that, because I'm not the daughter of a duke, but I don't worry about that. It looks good, and that's all that matters. You can't get away from the title. I was born in Carbondale, Illinois, but that doesn't matter—I'm an



"I DANCE DURING SUPPER, AND IT TAKES THREE VANS TO CARRY MY SALARY TO THE BANK."

English countess, doing barefoot dancing to work off the mortgage on the ancestral castle, and they eat me. Take it from me, Claire, I'm a riot.

"Well, that's that. What I am really writing about is to tell you that you have got to come over here. I've taken a house at Brookport, on Long Island, for the summer. You can stay with me till the fall, and then I can easily get you a good job in New York. I have some pull these days, believe me. Not that you'll need my help. The managers have only got to see you and they'll all want you. I showed one of them that photograph you gave me, and he went up in the air. They pay twice as big salaries over here, you know, as in England, so come by the next boat.

"Claire, darling, you must come. **I'm**

wretched. Algie has got my goat the worst way. If you don't know what that means it means that he's been behaving like a perfect pig. I hardly know where to begin. Well, it was this way: directly I made my hit my press agent, a real bright man named Sherriff, got busy, of course. Interviews, you know, and Advice to Young Girls in the evening papers, and How I preserve my Beauty, and all that sort of thing. Well, one thing he made me do was to buy a snake and a monkey. Roscoe Sherriff is crazy about animals as aids to advertisement. He says an animal story is the thing he does best. So I bought them.

"Algie kicked from the first. I ought to tell you that since we left England he has taken up painting footling little pictures, and has got the artistic temperament badly. All his life he's been starting some new fool thing. When I first met him he prided himself on having the finest collection of photographs of race-horses in England. Then he got a craze for model engines. After that he used to work the piano player till I nearly went crazy. And now it's pictures.

"I don't mind his painting. It gives him something to do and keeps him out of mischief. He has a studio down in Washington Square, and is perfectly happy messing about there all day.

"Everything would be fine if he didn't think it necessary to tack on the artistic temperament to his painting. He's developed the idea that he has nerves and everything upsets them.

"Things came to a head this morning at breakfast. Clarence, my snake, has the cutest way of climbing up the leg of the table and looking at you pleadingly in the hope that you will give him soft-boiled egg, which he adores. He did it this morning, and no sooner had his head appeared above the table than Algie, with a kind of sharp wail, struck him a violent blow on the nose with a teaspoon. Then he turned to me, very pale, and said: 'Pauline, this must end! The time has come to speak up. A nervous, highly-strung man like myself should not, and must not, be called upon to live in a house where he is constantly meeting snakes and monkeys without warning. Choose between me and——'

"We had got as far as this when Eustace, the monkey, who I didn't know was in the room at all, suddenly sprang on to his back. He is very fond of Algie.

"Would you believe it? Algie walked straight out of the house, still holding the teaspoon, and has not returned. Later in the day he called me up on the 'phone and said that, though he realized that a man's place was the home, he declined to cross the threshold again until I had got rid of Eustace and Clarence. I tried to reason with him. I told him that he ought to think himself lucky it wasn't anything worse than a monkey and a snake, for the last person Roscoe Sherriff handled, an emotional actress named Devenish, had to keep a young puma. But he wouldn't listen, and the end of it was that he rang off and I have not seen or heard of him since.

"I am broken-hearted. I won't give in, but I am having an awful time. So, dearest Claire, do come over and help me. If you could possibly sail by the *Atlantic*, leaving Southampton on the twenty-fourth of this month, you would meet a friend of mine whom I think you would like. His name is Dudley Pickering, and he made a fortune in automobiles. I expect you have heard of the Pickering automobiles?

"Darling Claire, do come, or I know I shall weaken and yield to Algie's outrageous demands, for, though I would like to hit him with a brick, I love him dearly.

"Your affectionate

"POLLY WETHERBY."

Claire sank back against the cushioned seat and her eyes filled with tears of disappointment. Of all the things which would have chimed in with her discontented mood at that moment a sudden flight to America was the most alluring. Only one consideration held her back—she had not the money for her fare.

Polly might have thought of that, she reflected, bitterly. She took the letter up again and saw that on the last page there was a postscript:—

"P.S.—I don't know how you are fixed for money, old girl, but if things are the same with you as in the old days you can't be rolling. So I have paid for a passage for you with the liner people this side, and they have cabled their English office, so you can sail whenever you want to. Come right over."

An hour later the manager of the Southampton branch of the White Star Line was dazzled by an apparition, a beautiful girl who burst in upon him with flushed face and shining eyes, demanding a berth on the steamship *Atlantic* and talking about a Lady Wetherby. Ten minutes later, her passage secured, Claire was walking to the local theatre to inform those in charge of the destinies of The Girl and the Artist number one company that they must look elsewhere for a substitute for Miss Claudia Winslow. Then she went back to her hotel to write a letter home, notifying her mother of her plans.

She looked at her watch. It was six o'clock. Back in West Kensington a rich smell of dinner would be floating through the flat; the cook, watching the boiling cabbage, would be singing A Few More Years Shall Roll; her mother would be sighing; and her little brother Percy would be employed upon some juvenile deviltry, the exact nature of which it was not possible to conjecture, though one could be certain that it would be something involving a deafening noise.

Claire smiled a happy smile.

IV.

THE offices of Messrs. Nichols, Nichols, Nichols, and Nichols were in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The first Nichols had been dead since the reign of King William the Fourth, the second since the jubilee year of Queen Victoria. The remaining brace were Lord Dawlish's friend Jerry and his father, a formidable old man who knew all

"EUSTACE, THE MONKEY, SUDDENLY SPRANG ON TO HIS BACK."

the shady secrets of all the noble families in England.

Bill walked up the stairs and was shown into the room where Jerry, when his father's eye was upon him, gave his daily imitation of a young man labouring with diligence and enthusiasm

at the law. His father being at the moment out at lunch, the junior partner was practising putts with an umbrella and a ball of paper.

Jerry Nichols was not the typical lawyer. At Cambridge, where Bill had first made his acquaintance, he had been notable for an exuberance of which Lincoln's Inn Fields had not yet cured him. There was an airy disregard for legal formalities about him which exasperated his father, an attorney of the old school. He came to the point, directly Bill entered the room, with a speed and levity that would have appalled Nichols Senior, and must have caused the other two Nicholses to revolve in their graves.

"Halloa, Bill, old man," he said, prodding him amiably in the waistcoat with the ferrule of the umbrella. "How's the boy? Fine! So'm I. So you got my message? Wonderful invention, the telephone."

"I've just come from the club."

"Take a chair."

"What's the matter?"

Jerry Nichols thrust Bill into a chair and seated himself on the table.

"Now look here, Bill," he said, "this isn't the way we usually do this sort of thing, and if the governor were here he would spend an hour and a half rambling on about testators and beneficiary legatees, and parties of the first part, and all that sort of rot. But as he isn't here I want to know, as one pal to another, what you've been doing to an old buster of the name of Nutcombe."

"Nutcombe?"

"Nutcombe."

"Not Ira Nutcombe?"

"Ira J. Nutcombe, formerly of Chicago, later of London, now a disembodied spirit."

"Is he dead?"

"Yes. And he's left you something like a million pounds."

Lord Dawlish looked at his watch.

"Joking apart, Jerry, old man," he said, "what did you ask me to come here for? The committee expects me to spend some of my time at the club, and if I hang about here all the afternoon I shall lose my job. Besides, I've got to get back to ask them for——"

Jerry Nichols clutched his forehead with both hands, raised both hands to heaven, and then, as if despairing of calming himself by these means, picked up a paper-weight from the desk and hurled it at a portrait of the founder of the firm, which hung over the mantelpiece. He got down from the table and crossed the room to inspect the ruins.

Then, having taken a pair of scissors and cut the cord, he allowed the portrait to fall to the floor.

He rang the bell. The prematurely-aged office-boy, who was undoubtedly destined to become a member of the firm some day, answered the ring.

"Perkins."

"Yes, sir?"

"Inspect yonder *soufflé*."

"Yes, sir."

"You have observed it?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are wondering how it got there?"

"Yes, sir."

"I will tell you. You and I were in here, discussing certain legal minutiæ in the interests of the firm, when it suddenly fell. We both saw it and were very much surprised and startled. I soothed your nervous system by giving you this half-crown. The whole incident was very painful. Can you remember all this to tell my father when he comes in? I shall be out lunching then."

"Yes, sir."

"An admirable lad that," said Jerry Nichols as the door closed. "He has been here two years, and I have never heard him say anything except 'Yes, sir.' He will go far. Well, now that I am calmer let us return to your little matter. Honestly, Bill, you make me sick. When I contemplate you the iron enters my soul. You stand there talking about your tuppeny-ha'penny job as if it mattered a cent whether you kept it or not. Can't you understand plain English? Can't you realize that you can buy Brown's and turn it into a moving-picture house if you like? You're a millionaire!"

Bill's face expressed no emotion whatsoever. Outwardly he appeared unmoved. Inwardly he was a riot of bewilderment, incapable of speech. He stared at Jerry dumbly.

"We've got the will in the old oak chest," went on Jerry Nichols. "I won't show it to you, partly because the governor has got the key and he would have a fit if he knew that I was giving you early information like this, and partly because you wouldn't understand it. It is full of 'whereases' and 'peradventures' and 'heretofores' and similar swank, and there aren't any stops in it. It takes the legal mind, like mine, to tackle wills. What it says, when you've peeled off a few of the long words which they put in to make it more interesting, is that old Nutcombe leaves you the money because you are the only man who ever did him a disinterested kindness—and what I want to get out of you is, what was the disinterested kindness? Because I'm going straight out to do it to every elderly, rich-looking man I can find till I pick a winner."

Lord Dawlish found speech.

"Jerry, is this really true?"

"Gospel."

"You aren't pulling my leg?"

"Pulling your leg? Of course, I'm not pulling your leg. What do you take me for? I'm a dry, hard-headed lawyer. The firm of Nichols, Nichols, Nichols, and Nichols doesn't go about pulling people's legs!"

"Good Lord!"

"It appears from the will that you worked this disinterested gag, whatever it was, at Marvis Bay no longer ago than last year. Wherein you showed a lot of sense, for Ira J., having altered his will in your favour, apparently had no time before he died to alter it again in somebody else's, which he would most

certainly have done if he had lived long enough, for his chief recreation seems to have been making his will. To my certain knowledge he has made three in the last two years. I've seen them. He was one of those confirmed will-makers. He got the habit at an early age, and was never able to shake it off. Do you remember anything about the man ? "

" It isn't possible ! "

" Anything's possible with a man cracked enough to make freak wills and not cracked enough to have them disputed on the ground of insanity. What did you do to him at Marvis Bay ? Save him from drowning ? "

" I cured him of slicing."

" You did what ? "

" He used to slice his approach shots. I cured him."

" The thing begins to hang together. A certain plausibility creeps into it. The late Nutcombe was crazy about golf. The governor used to play with him now and then at Walton Heath. It was the only thing Nutcombe seemed to live for. That being so, if you got rid of his slice for him it seems to me that you earned your money. The only point that occurs to me is, how does it affect your amateur status ? It looks to me as if you were now a pro."

" But, Jerry, it's absurd. All I did was to give him a tip or two. We were the only men down there, as it was out of the season, and that drew us together. And when I spotted this slice of his I just gave him a bit of advice. I give you my word that was all. He can't have left me a fortune on the strength of that ! "

" You don't tell the story right, Bill. I can guess what really happened—to wit, that you gave up all your time to helping the old fellow improve his game, regardless of the fact that it completely ruined your holiday."

" Oh, no ! "

" It's no use sitting there saying ' Oh, no ! ' I can see you at it. The fact is, you're such an infernally good chap that something of this sort was bound to happen to you sooner or later. I think making you his heir was the only sensible thing old Nutcombe ever did. In his place I'd have done the same."

" But he didn't even seem decently grateful at the time."

" Probably not. He was a queer old bird. He had a most almighty row with the governor in this office only a month or two ago about absolutely nothing. They disagreed about something trivial, and old Nutcombe stalked out and never came in again. That's the sort of old bird he was."

" Was he sane, do you think ? "

" Absolutely, for legal purposes. We have three opinions from leading doctors collected by him in case of accidents, I suppose—each of which declares him perfectly sound from the collar upward. But a man can be pretty far gone, you know, without being legally insane, and old Nutcombe—well, suppose we call him whimsical. He seems to have zigzagged between the normal and the eccentric.

" His only surviving relatives appear to be a nephew and a niece. The nephew dropped out of the running two years ago when his aunt, old Nutcombe's wife, who had divorced old Nutcombe, left him her money. This seems to have soured the old boy on the nephew, for in the first of his wills that I've seen—you remember I told you I had seen three—he leaves the niece the pile and the nephew only gets twenty pounds. Well, so far there's nothing very eccentric about old Nutcombe's proceedings. But wait !

" Six months after he had made that will he came in here and made another. This left twenty pounds to the nephew as before, but nothing at all to the niece. Why, I don't know. There was nothing in the will about her having done anything to offend him during those six months, none of those nasty slams you see in wills about ' I bequeath to my only son John one shilling and sixpence. Now perhaps he's sorry he married the cook.' As far as I can make out he changed his will just as he did when he left the money to you, purely through some passing whim. Anyway, he did change it. He left the pile to support the movement those people are running for getting the Jews back to Palestine.

" He didn't seem, on second thoughts, to feel that this was quite such a brainy scheme as he had at first, and it wasn't long before he came trotting back to tear up this second will and switch back to the first one—the one leaving the money to the niece. That restoration to sanity lasted till about a month ago, when he broke loose once more and paid his final visit here to will you the contents of his stocking. This morning I see he's dead after a short illness, so you collect. Congratulations ! "

Lord Dawlish had listened to this speech in perfect silence. He now rose and began to pace the room. He looked warm and uncomfortable. His demeanour, in fact, was by no means the accepted demeanour of the lucky heir.

" This is awful ! " he said. " Good Lord, Jerry, it's frightful ! "

" Awful !—being left a million pounds ? "

" Yes, like this. I feel like a bally thief."

" Why on earth ? "

" If it hadn't been for me this girl—what's her name ? "

" Her name is Boyd—Elizabeth Boyd."

" She would have had the whole million if it hadn't been for me. Have you told her yet ? "

" She's in America. I was writing her a letter just before you came in—informal, you know, to put her out of her misery. If I had waited for the governor to let her know in the usual course of red tape we should never have got anywhere. Also one to the nephew, telling him about his twenty pounds. I believe in humane treatment on these occasions. The governor would write them a legal letter with so many ' hereinbefores ' in it that they would get the idea that they had been left the whole pile. I just send a cheery line saying ' It's no good,

old top. Abandon hope,' and they know just where they are. Simple and considerate."

A glance at Bill's face moved him to further speech.

"I don't see why you should worry, Bill. How, by any stretch of the imagination, can you make out that you are to blame for this Boyd girl's misfortune? It looks to me as if these eccentric wills of old Nutcombe's came in cycles, as it were. Just as he was due for another outbreak he happened to meet you. It's a moral certainty that if he hadn't met you he would have left all his money to a Home for Superannuated Caddies or a Fund for Supplying the Deserving Poor with Niblicks. Why should you blame yourself?"

"I don't blame myself. It isn't exactly that. But—but, well, what would you feel like in my place?"

"A two-year-old."

"Wouldn't you do anything?"

"I certainly would. By my halidom, I would! I would spend that money with a vim and speed that would make your respected ancestor, the Beau, look like a village miser."

"You wouldn't—er—pop over to America and see whether something couldn't be arranged?"

"What!"

"I mean—suppose you were popping in any case. Suppose you had happened to buy a ticket for New York on to-morrow's boat, wouldn't you try to get in touch with this girl when you got to America, and see if you couldn't —er—fix up something?"

Jerry Nichols looked at him in honest consternation. He had always known that old Bill was a dear old ass, but he had never dreamed that he was such an infernal old ass as this.

"You aren't thinking of doing that?" he gasped.

"Well, you see, it's a funny coincidence, but I was going to America, anyhow, to-morrow. I don't see why I shouldn't try to fix up something with this girl."

"What do you mean—fix up something? You don't suggest that you should give the money up, do you?"

"I don't know. Not exactly that, perhaps. How would it be if I gave her half, what? Anyway, I should like to find out about her, see if she's hard up, and so on. I should like to nose round, you know, and—er—and so forth, don't you know. Where did you say the girl lived?"

"I didn't say, and I'm not sure that I shall. Honestly, Bill, you mustn't be so quixotic."

"There's no harm in my nosing round, is there? Be a good chap and give me the address."

"Well"—with misgivings—"Brookport, Long Island."

"Thanks."

"Bill, are you really going to make a fool of yourself?"

"Not a bit of it, old chap. I'm just going to —er——"

"To nose round?"

"To nose round," said Bill.

Jerry Nichols accompanied his friend to the door, and once more peace reigned in the offices of Nichols, Nichols, Nichols, and Nichols.

The time of a man who has at a moment's notice decided to leave his native land for a sojourn on foreign soil is necessarily taken up with a variety of occupations; and it was not till the following afternoon, on the boat at Liverpool, that Bill had leisure to write to Claire, giving her the news of what had befallen him. He had booked his ticket by a Liverpool boat in preference to one that sailed from Southampton, because he had not been sure how Claire would take the news of his sudden decision to leave for America. There was the chance that she might ridicule or condemn the scheme, and he preferred to get away without seeing her. Now that he had received this astounding piece of news from Jerry Nichols he was relieved that he had acted in this way. Whatever Claire might have thought of the original scheme, there was no doubt at all what she would think of his plan of seeking out Elizabeth Boyd with a view to dividing the legacy with her.

He was guarded in his letter. He mentioned no definite figures. He wrote that Ira Nutcombe of whom they had spoken so often had most surprisingly left him in his will a large sum of money, and eased his conscience by telling himself that half of a million pounds undeniably was a large sum of money.

The addressing of the letter called for thought. She would have left Southampton with the rest of the company before it could arrive. Where was it that she said they were going next week? Portsmouth, that was it. He addressed the letter Care of The Girl and the Artist Company, to the King's Theatre, Portsmouth.

(To be continued.)

HOW TO PLAY WITH EXPRESSION.

WITH SOME HINTS ON THE RIGHT USE OF THE PEDAL.

By MARK HAMBOURG.

THE true interpretive artist should not only be content with "letting the music speak for itself" (to borrow a stereotyped phrase of those critics who regard personal thought and individuality as a source of reproach). Such a passive attitude is merely looking at the musical art from the standpoint of photography. No; rather must the interpreter endeavour to step into the composer's shoes, to imagine with the poignancy of his imagination, to feel again what he felt, and by so doing to rekindle in the music all the power of fantasy, life, and individuality with which it was originally endowed by its creator. For music is essentially an art that demands interpretation—at least, for its highest effect and appeal. There are continual controversies about this aspect of music, but in my opinion the pianist whose part it is to be the public performer must find in the interpretation of the music the kernel of his whole profession.

Of course, the boundary line between interpretation and the odious vices of distortion and perversion must be kept carefully in view, and for this reason there are some basic rules to guide the student, from which it is impossible to diverge, and it is about some of these that I wish to speak here.

As regards what is now commonly called classical music, as distinct from the romantic or modern creations, it comprises most of the compositions that were written up till the death of Beethoven in 1826. In this kind of music the ideas and effects are for the most part presented by means of certain recognized and distinct forms of expression, and these, though greatly amplified and varied according to the genius of the composer, remain very similar as regards the main structural features.

Around this great school of musical thought, which contains some of the finest treasures of pianoforte literature, many traditions have arisen as to the methods by which the interpretation of such masterpieces should be approached. This is due partly to the distance that separates us from the time of their creation, but mainly to the fact that some pre-eminently great performers have given renderings of these works at various periods, which renderings have been handed down by their pupils and followers, who afterwards themselves became teachers on a lesser plane. Thus the tradition grew up from teacher to student, until by degrees it crystallized itself into a prescribed and definite point of view that has to be taken into account. It is to-day, as always, the mission of the authoritative interpreter to amplify and throw new lights upon these traditions, and not be content to accept the general version which his less gifted brethren have to subscribe to with reverent faith. But even for the great artist the fundamental principles must remain the same, and for him, as for the student, they will form the guiding line of his mental vision.

The earliest pianoforte music we know of was written in the form of simple dance measures such as courantes, allemandes, pavanes, gigues, and so forth. These were performed upon very primitive keyed instruments, amongst the best known being the virginals, harpsichords, and spinets, and they were only suitable to the plainest methods of treatment. Indeed, the story is told of Dr. Arne, the celebrated eighteenth-

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century English composer, that he said about one of those instruments, " It is the devil's own instrument, my masters, like the scratch of a quill with a squeak at the end of it."

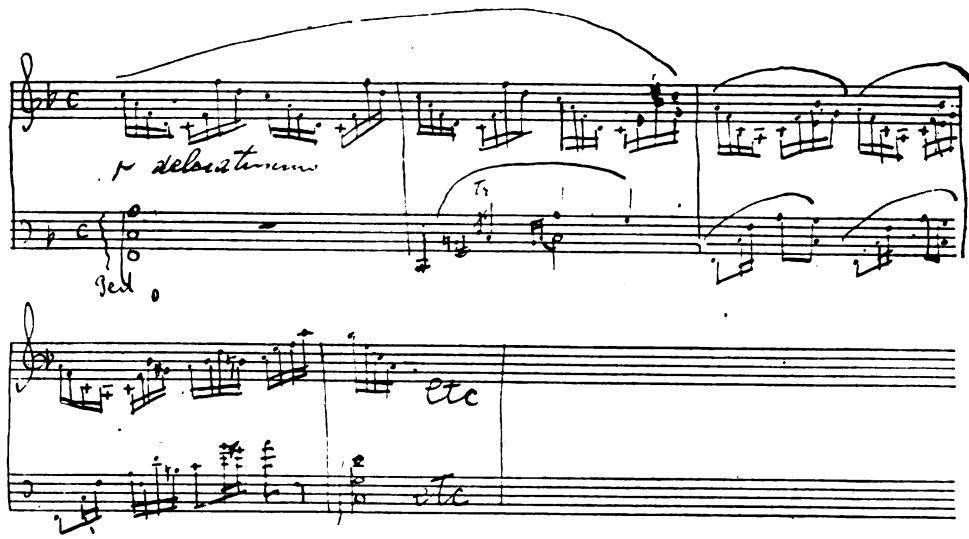
Only since the variety and capacity of instruments have developed, and also since Bach created the complex and polyphonic harmonies which revolutionized pianoforte music, has the scope of harmonical expression become so greatly enlarged, and the problems which surround it so complicated. The discovery of the pedal, too, changed the whole complexion of interpretation on the piano, while in the light of modern technic it seems strange to think that before the advent of Bach the use of the thumb and also of the fifth finger was absolutely forbidden by the best teachers. In those days the wrist was held high and the hand stiff; a high chair was no doubt also used for sitting at the instrument, and the whole attitude while playing must have been one of rigidity and precision. Any rendering of this primitive music was necessarily very quiet and limited in the means employed. All violent crescendo or diminuendo effects were impossible, and the rhythm was confined to the swaying but monotonous lilt of the gigues of that day, or to the more stately measures of the pavanes. Certainly it would seem, to say the least of it, indecorous to play a piece of the sixteenth century even on a modern pianoforte with the abandonment of a Liszt Rhapsody, or, *vice versa*, to render the passionate music of Chopin or Liszt with the demure coldness of the early masters. This is where a sense of style should come in, to help the artist in his conception of the different aspects of musical composition.

And what is musical style? I think it can be explained as the impression reflected upon the music by the manners, customs, and modes of thought which were characteristic of the epoch when it was written. For, after all, people lived, loved, and suffered every kind of emotion in former centuries just as we do now, only each period has had its diverse ways of expressing these things in the arts.

What, then, do we mean by the interpretation of music itself for the purpose of performance? Is it not the employing of all possible technical means to infuse the spirit of life into the inanimate musical form, and cause it to be kindled into a definite sound-picture for the mind of the listener? On the pianoforte this is done by means of accents, variations of tone-values (*crescendo* and *diminuendo*), variations of rhythm (*accellerando* and *ritardando*), variety of touch, and manipulation of the pedals. Accents enable the pianist to bring into prominence certain notes, or groups of notes, which might be comparable to cries, exclamations, interjections in the elocutionary art, or to sudden bursts of colour in painting. These and other similes could be followed up through the whole scale of human emotions, for the well-trained hand of the pianist, being the pliant tool of his imagination, represents to him what the brush does to the painter, or the voice to the actor. And many of the same æsthetic laws govern all these in their work as far as is possible, when the difference of circumstance and material is taken into account.

As far as the general rules of interpretation are concerned, I will give a few which appertain to what might be called the syntax of music. Such are the following. An ascending passage should be played with a crescendo, a descending passage with a diminuendo. The pedal must be changed according to the harmonies, in order to blend the tones, and to enable notes to be held on which the fingers could not manage without its assistance. Rhythm, too, as distinct from time, must be clearly marked, so as to indicate where accents ought to fall, and to create atmosphere. Music played without true rhythm will always sound colourless and insipid. Time should also be well defined, that it may preserve the general form of the composition. Skilful use of all these means makes up the art of interpreting, and it is for the mentality of the pianist to employ them in their varying degrees, to mould them, combine them, and dispose of them, and thus invest the whole work with the pulsating breath of actuality. No doubt there must exist in the interpreter a natural good taste which will govern his outlook, and this can only spring from a sound musical instinct trained by education, and by hearing great artists perform. For it goes without saying that there are no absolute rules about interpretation. There can but be some broad outlines of style and taste to stimulate the imagination of the student, and help him in his task.

As I have already pointed out, the interpretations of the masterpieces of music by great artists become established as traditions. Still, the personal thought of the performer should make its influence felt in the rendering of all music, even of the most classical type, if that rendering is to be of any real value and interest, only this personality has to conform to the general dicta of the style. Thus it will be found that no two fine artists will interpret a piece in the

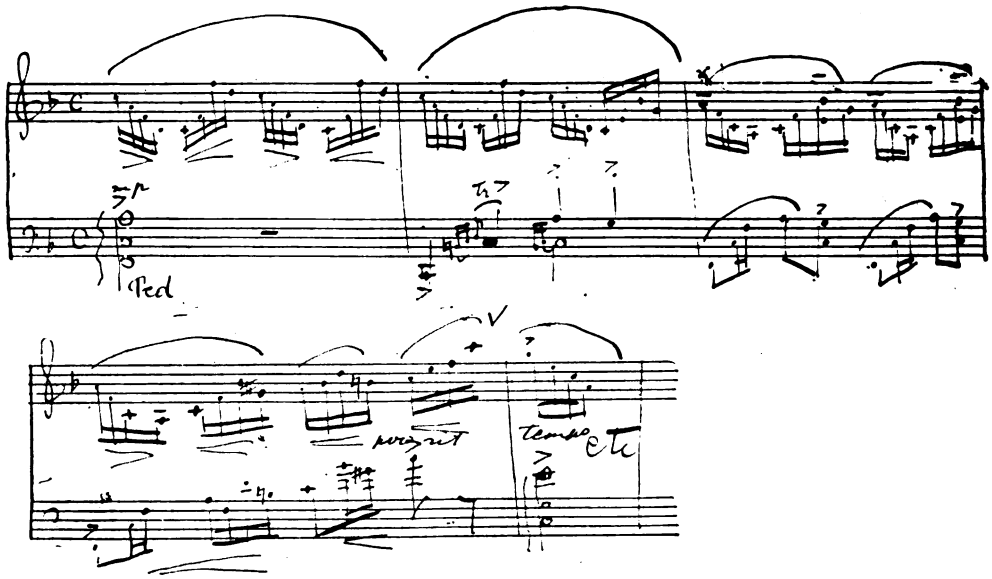


TWO RENDERINGS OF THE OPENING SUBJECT OF CHOPIN'S PRELUDE IN F MAJOR.

1.—Medium Tempo. Accompaniment very legato in the right hand and fingers very near the keyboard. No crescendo or diminuendo. The impression is one of complete tranquillity or twilight.

same way. There may be a thousand differences of expression in their particular performance, and each of them equally correct. This fact only illustrates how imagination and colour may be infused into interpretation in much variety. For great musical compositions may well be compared to beautiful landscapes, which are ever-changing in colour and effect through the action of atmospheric conditions. On no two days does the country look alike, yet its composition and outline remain fixed, everlasting.

To show how different renderings of the same piece may be possible without the structure of the work being in any way altered, I give here two interpretations of the opening subject of Chopin's Prelude in F major, which both possess equal merit.



ANOTHER RENDERING OF THE SAME SUBJECT.

2.—Slow Tempo. Accompaniment in the right hand half-strength with thrown fingers—left-hand melody brought out with accents as marked. In the right hand undulating movement expressed by a diminuendo and crescendo. The impression is one of movement—birds singing—or water rippling.

Another detail which it is necessary for the student to bear in mind is that technical passages ought never to be played as if they were of purely digital dexterity, as this method makes of such passages only hard, uninteresting interludes of display, wearisome to the listener and of no value musically. All technical passages, even the most difficult ones, should be considered as embroideries of the main harmonies; in fact, they are the rhetoric of the composition. Melody also should *not* be knocked out with unbalanced enthusiasm to the entire detriment of the accompaniment, nor should any two notes of a melody be given with exactly the same tone-colour, for this will create monotony of sound. Every single tone should be on a general scale of gradation, each having its own place in the scheme of chiaroscuro; because the mechanical tone of the piano itself, with which we are dealing, makes it imperative that every device to conjure up perspective and charm should be brought into service, and above all typewriting effects of precise striking must be strenuously avoided.

In fact, the keyboard ought never to be struck hard at all in legato passages or in melody of any kind. On the contrary, the keys must be caressed with a sort of almost stroking movement, to obtain the requisite tone-values. And in connection with this there is another thing to which I attach great importance—namely, that the hand in its attitude on the keyboard should reflect in some degree the spirit of the music. For instance, it would not be natural to hold the hands as formally when playing Chopin as in the performance of sixteenth-century music. Again, in a vivacious piece the hands should look sprightly and full of energy, while in slow cantabile movements they should present a soft and sinuous appearance. For even the fact of the hand looking hard and stiff during playing will assuredly affect the sound adversely, and rob it of all beauty of quality.

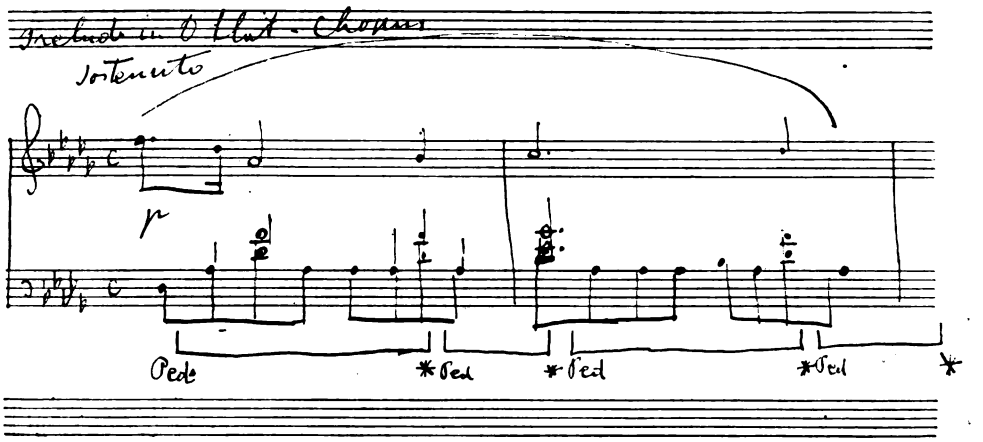
All these things are intimately connected with the preparation of a fine touch upon the piano. The word "touch" as a musical term signifies really the mode by which the fingers attack the keyboard. For the great difficulty to be contended with on the piano when it is necessary to produce a singing tone lies in this, that by its mechanical composition, if once a key is struck upon the instrument, no further modification of the sound-quality is possible. No vibrato or mellowing of the tone can be afterwards applied as on stringed instruments; with the piano, all is over when the finger has once fallen and the hammer has struck the strings.

Therefore anything that can be done to sweeten the tone must be attempted before the striking of the note. By this I mean that an infinitesimal time should elapse between the action of lifting the finger to strike and the definite falling of the finger upon the key. Touch must be thus prepared in the playing of all melody and singing passages with a slow pressing movement of the hand and fingers. This caressing touch could not, of course, be employed in rapid difficult passages, where direct quick blows of the fingers are indispensable in order to save time. In such cases, and in the higher development of technical brilliance, no more lifting of the fingers is necessary than is compatible with distinct articulation.

I now come to the loud or sustaining pedal, which Rubinstein aptly called "the soul of the piano." It certainly is the best friend the pianist has at his disposal for helping him to overcome the material drawbacks of the pianoforte's constitution, and without it no legato playing or prolongation of tone would be possible at all. Of course, there are two pedals on the modern pianoforte, even sometimes three, but the soft one is only used, as its name implies, for deadening the sound. The loud pedal, as it is called, is the real important factor, and when I speak of the pedal in future as a general term, it is always to this one that I am referring. The name "loud pedal" is really a misnomer, as its function is rather to sweeten the sound and render it more open, and also to add brilliance to the tone rather than actual loudness. If the pedal is a good friend it can also be the worst possible enemy if badly employed. Nothing is more terrible than the general blur cast over everything by the pedal when it is applied without expert knowledge. A few simple rules about how it should be used are as follows.

I have already mentioned that the pedal must be changed on different harmonies; it should also never be taken directly on the first beat of the bar to obtain the best results, but in syncopation with that beat, as in the example on the next page.

The pedal can also be used in passages to give a more sustaining quality to the tone, though here care must be taken not to impair distinctness, but a great deal more pedal can be applied without causing any blur if an accent is given on the bass note on which the passage is built. The pedal may be applied in a greater degree in the higher than in the



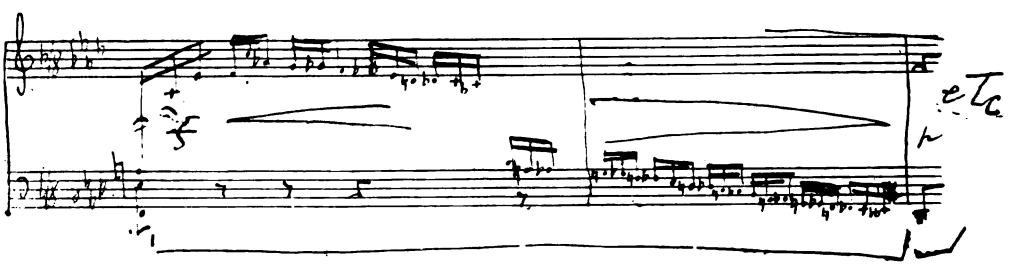
EXAMPLE SHOWING THE PEDAL TAKEN IN SYNCOPATION WITH THE BEAT.

It will be noticed that the pedal is taken directly after the note is struck and not on it, the finger not being released until the pedal is pressed down. The clamp under the bass part indicates the exact duration of holding down the pedal.

lower registers of the instrument, as the higher tones can stand, and also need, more sustaining than the lower ones, whilst these last possess of themselves a certain sustenance of tone, and therefore blur more quickly. When applying the pedal it should never be banged on, but pressed down gently and gradually. It is essential to possess a good knowledge of harmony in order to be able to apply the pedal correctly, for it is necessary when using it to understand something about the structure of chords. All blurring over of tone by the pedal produces a most unpleasant impression upon the ear, and must be rigorously guarded against, except when, in some particular passage, a special effect is required, such as in the F minor Ballade of Chopin, in the example given here.

But this is only an outlying instance which really appertains to the most elaborate study of tone-colour. The general elementary rule for the student, however, remains that the blurring of tones by the pedal is bad—in fact, it is one of the worst faults a pianist can commit. Professional pianists use the pedal very much more than amateurs, but it will not be so apparent in their playing. This is because the experienced artist takes his pedal in a correct way harmonically, so that it blends the tones naturally and does not upset the outlines, while the player who does not possess the understanding or the training neglects to change the pedal with the harmonies, and thereby produces a smudge of sound instead of clear colour.

The pedal is indeed the essence of life to the pianoforte, and by managing it wisely the pianist will conjure up out of his music the most vivid and satisfying impressions, while to the lovers of beautiful sound there can be no more fascinating study than the many and varied combinations which the pedal is able to obtain by the binding together of different tone-colours.



EXAMPLE SHOWING SPECIAL BLURRING EFFECT OF PEDAL IN CHOPIN'S F MINOR BALLADE.

Here the pedal is taken for two bars instead of being changed at each bar. This is done to obtain an effect of surging water, or the wind whistling through the trees. The clamp under the bass part indicates the exact duration of holding down the pedal.

THE PARCEL.

By MRS. BELLOC LOWNDES.

Illustrated by Warwick Reynolds.

I.

THE fat German Landsturmer, Gustav Shenck, at once so much and so little a soldier, toiled up the steep central street of Douvenay, the Champagne village where was quartered General Prince Botho von Bidingen and his staff.

Shenck was chief military postman of the staff, and as such felt himself to be an important personage, but the work his responsible position entailed was onerous to one who was stout and short of breath.

This morning he was laden, and overladen, with the well-filled bags of the Field Post service. They had been adjusted on to his shoulders, placed over his arm, one even hung round his neck, by his zealous subordinates. And the bags, in addition to postcards and letters, contained parcels—quantities of parcels—for the most part filled with *delicatessen*, humble and luxurious, according to whether they were for officers or men.

Gustav Shenck's load was heavy, and his heart was heavy too, for he himself had received a letter from home to-day, and it said that things were not going well in Saxony, that life was getting, even now in these early weeks of war, more difficult every day. True, all through the letter there was the insistent hope and belief that soon glorious victory would send the warriors of Germany home to their hearths each with his share of the huge indemnity wrung from wealthy France. But as he read those words of hope Shenck had shaken his head. There were curious rumours current even in quiet Douvenay—persistent rumours that there had been some kind of defeat and halt just before Paris, and that all was not quite as well with the prospects of a quick campaign as everyone had been led to expect would be the case.

Still Shenck was a kindly, easy-going fellow, and he had a smile and a nod for most of the grey-clad soldiers who came hurrying out of the houses on either side of the village street. The French inhabitants of Douvenay kept out of sight, though certain of their small children played about on the sun-splashed cobbles. With these the Landsturmer postman was on very kindly terms. Indeed, his heart sometimes yearned towards these little creatures who were, as he well knew, destined to become German, for this lovely little backwater village was in the heart of that smiling, opulent province of Champagne which the Kaiser intended to keep after the war. That being so, it seemed indeed a pity that these same children's mothers and grandmothers—their fathers were far away fighting, and their grandfathers had fled from the place at the approach of the German army—should be so sulky, in some cases so disagreeable, to the Germans now in peaceful occupation of their homes.

On Shenck trudged, up the sunny street. And then imperceptibly his face cleared, for he was approaching a spot where he knew himself sure of courtesy, and even of something better than courtesy—of a smiling welcome.

Standing well back from the paved roadway, behind a high iron gate, above which swung a big gilt bell, was a delightful-looking house built round a spacious courtyard. It was of brick now faded to a delicate rose-pink, and though it was late September the walls were wreathed with white and yellow flowering climbers, while in the courtyard stood six large green tubs filled with miniature orange trees. This house was the property of Léon Bissonet, the mayor of Douvenay, in peace times a prosperous—even in a modest way a famous—nurseryman. It was in La Maison Bissonet that General Prince von Bidingen, a veteran of 1870, had fixed his own quarters, instead of in the rat-beridden, unlived-in château outside the village.

Shenck rang the bell, and a moment later Mme. Bissonet came tripping across her flagged courtyard. She threaded her way quickly among the shining green boughs of the little orange trees, and as she came forward smiling she made a charming picture in her red and white check gown and large, clean white apron. Though she had a married

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"'NOTHING FOR ME, EH ?' AND THE GERMAN SHOOK HIS HEAD GAILY."

daughter, and was close on forty, Mme. Bissonet was still a very pretty woman. The colour came and went in her rounded cheeks, her eyes were bright and dark, her hair abundant, her teeth small and white. But then the mayoress of Douvenay was by birth a *Parisienne*, and her husband, very absurdly —or most of his old friends and neighbours thought so—allowed her to live the life of a *bourgeoise*. Till the outbreak of war she had always had a resident servant.

As she came up to the gate with a key in her hand, she made a pantomimic gesture, and called out—of course in French— "Nothing for me, eh ?" and the German shook his head gaily. It was now quite an old joke between them, renewed at least once, sometimes twice, each day. Thanks to their good-natured Prince, the mayor of Douvenay and his wife enjoyed many little privileges, but that of receiving news from the outside world was not among them. The letters and parcels which were left in such prodigal numbers at La Maison Bissonet were all, of course, for the General, and for the two aides-de-camp who shared his pleasant quarters.

Mme. Bissonet's guest, for so he courteously termed himself, was not only a distinguished, if aged, warrior ; he was also one of the most popular bachelor hosts of Berlin, and it was believed by his staff that most of his letters and parcels came from fair ladies who were mindful of favours past, as well as of favours to come.

The Prince was a burly, open-handed old fellow, bearing well his sixty-six years of life, and the Bissonets might well account themselves fortunate in having him in their house. Mme. Bissonet on her side made him thoroughly comfortable, and he often secretly wished he had such a woman to look after his household in Berlin.

And now, as she held out her large white apron, she was still smiling—smiling as few Frenchwomen ever smiled in those days. But Mme. Bissonet was a fortunate woman.

No one belonging to her was in the fighting line, and her only child, a daughter, had married last spring a Parisian who worked in the War Office, and thus was among the non-combatants of France.

But though, following the French fashion, her daughter is mentioned as first in her affections, Mme. Bissonet's child did not count in her life as did that child's father, Léon Bissonet. Most Frenchwomen are mothers first and lovers a long way after; but that was not so with this Frenchwoman.

Prince von Bidingen, who had all your old bachelor's softness of heart, had been touched, as well as amused, by the passionate affection his host and hostess bore to one another. They were more like bride and bridegroom than an old married couple. When she heard her husband's heavy footsteps—Léon was twelve years older than his Louise—Mme. Bissonet's eyes would brighten, the colour would come into her cheeks, and her confident, rather hard manner would melt away into tenderness.

The mayor of Douvenay was a fine type of yeoman Frenchman, but he had aged very much in the last few weeks, and there were lines of stern endurance on his face. In every way he was unlike his clever, eager, happy-looking wife. It was not that Mme. Bissonet did not care for her country; it was rather that she had that touching—one may almost call it that sublime—confidence in France which most Frenchwomen have. She believed that her country could be trusted to take care of itself, and, as we know, she was to be justified of her confidence. But her whole heart was wrapped up in her husband and in her home, and these two were safe.

She locked the great gate again on the broadly-smiling military postman, and walking more slowly, for her apron was now full of letters and parcels, she made her way back into her large, cheerful-looking kitchen, bright with its gleaming copper *batterie de cuisine*, and emptied out the contents of her apron on to her large, well-scrubbed table.

The Prince had gone off on a three days' visit to a brother General's headquarters, and though it was absurd to say so even to oneself, Mme. Bissonet found she quite missed her bluff old enemy. He was so polite, so—well, yes, so gallant, to this happy-natured, pretty Frenchwoman. He had actually gone to the trouble to arrange that during his absence his two young aides-de-camp should be elsewhere, so that the mayor of Douvenay and his wife should have three days together.

Mme. Bissonet took up and looked with fleeting curiosity at the letter addressed in the German script she was getting to know so well, and also, more carefully, she glanced at the well-packed parcels. Then she smiled again. The Prince had said, doubtless in joke, that *she* should have a parcel some day; that he would arrange to have one specially sent to her by the military Field Post.

She sat down for a few minutes. It was pleasant to feel that there was no one in the house, and that she and her husband would have a quiet, undisturbed hour in which to eat their *déjeuner*. They were going to have a piece of cold veal and a mayonnaise sauce. The sauce was already made, and the salad was draining in the larder.

The bell above the gate clanged out. Very quietly—for she did not suppose for a moment it could be anything of importance—Mme. Bissonet opened the door giving on to the courtyard. Then she gave a little cry of surprise and welcome, for she saw that her husband, her Léon, stood outside, and that though he was not due home for another hour. He always spent the whole morning, from eight o'clock onwards, in the rather shabby building, low down in the village, which was the mairie of Douvenay.

Even before she reached the gate he called out, "I've got to go to Chandlieu to-day"; then he stopped, for Léon Bissonet was a man of few words.

She opened the gate, and together, she with her plump little hand on his coat-sleeve, they walked towards the house.

The mayor of Douvenay was a tall man, with fine, regular features, and though he looked his full age of fifty-two there was no lack of decision of his face, or of strength in his firm footsteps.

Léon Bissonet had been only eight years old in 1870, but he well remembered all that had happened then, and when the Prince's staff and some eight hundred German soldiers had ridden into Douvenay three weeks ago, it was as if death had suddenly overshadowed his soul, death with no hope of resurrection. He was, of course, dully aware that things might have been much worse than they were, but, even so, the hours he spent down at the mairie were punctuated by many disagreeable and painful incidents of which he said nothing to his wife. The Prince's subordinates were not as courteous and well-bred as the Prince himself, and more than one of the German officers had taken a violent dislike to the unsmiling mayor, and took pleasure in being as insolent and as insulting to him as they dared to be.

The mere fact that the Prince happened to be absent for two or three days had already made a difference for the worse, and the Frenchman had welcomed the official summons, couched in the curious archaic French in which all German proclamations in France were then couched, commanding his presence at Chandlieu, a market town some twelve miles from Douvenay. He had already been sent for there, within three days of the occupation of the village, but on that occasion the Prince had placed a military motor at his disposal. The business concerning which he had then been summoned on that first occasion had been the requisition of a certain amount of cattle, and the German quartermaster, if abrupt, had not been uncivil. He supposed that it was something of the same kind now, and actually looked forward to the change of thought and scene. But this time, instead of being conveyed in one of the Prince's motors, he was to go there on a lorry. That would take rather longer, but it was all one to him.

It was not all one to Mme. Bissonet. "What a pity the Prince is away; *he* would have given you a car. It will be a hot, tiring journey!" She was looking at him anxiously, wondering with a flutter of the heart whether that slow-moving motor-lorry was likely to pass across any of the danger zone—that zone where the French "seventy-five" shells did such constant and such deadly harm to passing German convoys and ammunition wagons. She hoped the lorry would start after dark. But that hope was disappointed.

"I have to start in an hour," he said, slowly, "so I've brought up the keys of the mairie. I'd better have something to eat—a bit of bread and cheese will do—and then I'll go up and dress."

She set out the nice *déjeuner* she had looked forward to sharing with him, and then she went upstairs and busied herself putting out her husband's best clothes. The black suit he had bought new when he had become mayor of Douvenay, and which he wore at funerals, at weddings, and at christenings, was laid by her across a chair, and after a moment's hesitation she chose the white waistcoat in which he always celebrated a civil marriage. Then very carefully she brushed his top-hat.

Mme. Bissonet had all your true Frenchwoman's pride in, and love of, her bedroom. It was a large, sunny room, with four windows, and overlooked the nursery garden which stretched for many acres behind the house. When she was very young, at a time of her girlhood which she never cared to remember, a gentleman who was a famous artist as well as a Parisian had declared that yellow was her colour. And so, although in France yellow is supposed to be an unlucky tint, fine old yellow brocade curtains looped up the large, low bed which was sunk back in a recess of the wall, and the same brocade, an *épave* from a sale held at the château about the time of the Léon Bissonets' romantic wedding—for theirs, unlike most French village weddings, had been a romantic wedding—also covered the comfortable First Empire armchairs, and the uncomfortable narrow Empire sofa which was an object of luxury, not of use.

At the head of the bed, under the crucifix and the bit of blessed box which Mme. Bissonet had brought back from church last Palm Sunday, hung her wedding wreath, in a concave glass frame.

Set crosswise from one of the windows was a large, plain writing-table. It was here that Léon Bissonet liked to make out his accounts, and to do any other writing work that he did not care should be interrupted by inquisitive friends and neighbours downstairs. Standing on rockers, close to the table, was the curious, old-fashioned rosewood cradle in which the daughter of the house had lain eighteen years ago.

Mme. Bissonet had wished to put the cradle tidily away. She had laughingly suggested that it should accompany the newly-married couple to their Paris home. But Léon Bissonet had shaken his head. He liked to see the cradle where it was. As he bent over his writing-table making out his bills, he had only to look up and give a little glance aslant to be carried back to the time when he was by far the proudest husband, as well as the happiest father, in Douvenay.

But since the outbreak of the war there had been no accounts to make out, so the writing-table was now never used. To-day, however, Mme. Bissonet, after getting out her husband's best clothes, sat down there and hurriedly wrote a letter.

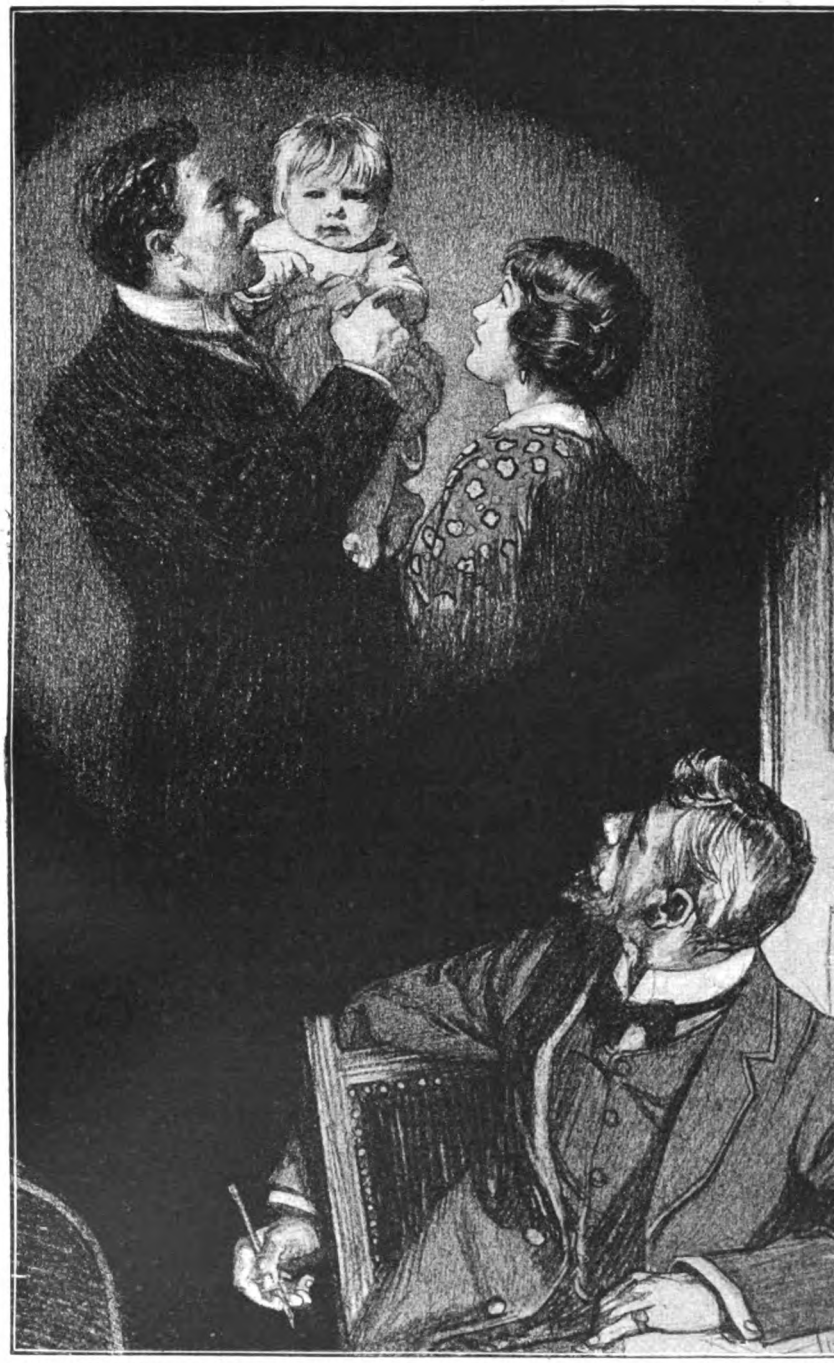
Having eaten his frugal luncheon, the mayor of Douvenay came upstairs, treading heavily through the empty house. His wife stayed with him while he dressed, and they discussed, or rather she discussed, his visit to Chandlieu.

At last the mayor, looking every inch a mayor, was ready, his hat in his hand, and smiling—smiling down at his wife as he never smiled at anyone else. And she, on her side, jumped up from the chair on which she had

been sitting and, running up to him, threw her arms round his neck and kissed him—kissed him—kissed him. "Good-bye, my darling," she said, and suddenly ran to the writing-table, while he stared at her perplexed.

Fromunder the thin pink blotting-paper, with its greying marks of long-dried ink, she drew out an envelope addressed to their daughter, and came and put it in his hand. "You may have a chance of getting this through." Her voice dropped instinctively, though they were alone in the house. "She must be fretting about us sadly, poor child."

A look of doubt flitted over his face. "You've been careful?" he murmured.



"HE HAD ONLY TO LOOK UP AND GIVE A LITTLE GLANCE ASLANT TO BE CARRIED BACK TO THE TIME WHEN HE WAS BY FAR THE PROUDEST HUSBAND, AS WELL AS THE HAPPIEST FATHER, IN DOUVENAY."

"But yes." She still spoke under her breath. "I've told her nothing—only that we are well, and—well treated. But I expect you'll have to bring the letter back. It isn't likely that you'll again have such a chance as you had last time." And she

sighed. Last time a Chandlieu lady, who was a very old friend, as well as a client, had offered to carry a letter through to Paris. But there had been no opportunity of getting the letter written.

As they walked through into the kitchen the mayor pulled out his large, old-fashioned turnip watch. It was ten minutes to twelve, and at twelve the motor-lorry was to start from the Grande Place, down in front of the church.

They walked across the courtyard, and she unlocked the gate, and together they passed through into the roadway. There he bent and kissed her upturned face. As he started walking down the street, and she watched his tall figure growing smaller, she told herself that Léon still looked a young and vigorous man, and that even in those ageing black clothes. She remembered that he had last worn them at the Mass which had been said for the soul of the first soldier from Douvenay fallen in the war. That was only seven weeks ago, but Mme. Bissonet had lost count of time, and it seemed much longer ago than that.

Slowly she went back, through into her own domain, and, turning, she locked the great gate which during the whole of her married life had always stood open, night as well as day, excepting during the *vendanges*. During the merry days when the grapes are being gathered the young folk are apt to get a little noisy, and prudent householders shut and lock their gates.

The courtyard seemed very empty to Mme. Bissonet, but when she went into the house, and the warm smell of some hot jam simmering on her big steel *fourneau* met her nostrils, she felt less forlorn; also, emotion makes a healthy woman hungry, and Mme. Bissonet began to feel that it would be pleasant to sit down and eat some *déjeuner*.

"THERE HE BENT AND KISSED HER UPTURNED FACE."

As she ate what Léon had left of the cold veal and the excellent mayonnaise sauce, she planned out her afternoon's work. She never allowed the woman who came in for two hours each morning to help with the rough work of the house to enter the Prince's rooms, for she was shrewd enough to know that if she always did them herself trouble was far less likely to arise. Both the Prince and

his aides-de-camp were extraordinarily suspicious. They scented a spy, or at least a purveyor of information, in every woman, almost in every child, of Douvenay. It was a peculiarity which puzzled Mme. Bissonet, and made her feel a little contemptuous of her alien guests.

The afternoon went by, quietly, busily, and as the evening approached she yearned for her Léon's presence, and also—though she was a little ashamed of the fact—she missed the Prussian Prince, and the stir and bustle of his presence in the other half of the house.

When at last she did go up to bed, she did not fall at once into a sound, healthy sleep as she was wont to do. Instead she slipped off into fitful snatches of slumber, broken by anxious dreams, and for the first time for many years she dreamt of her youth.

Mme. Bissonet had not always been in her present happy and secure position. She was now thirty-nine, and the first half of her life had been very unhappy, so unhappy, indeed, that she never allowed her thoughts to go back to that time. But to-night, when she woke from that queer, vivid dream, painful old memories crowded in on her—memories of a neglected, sordid childhood spent with a foster-mother in one of the poorer quarters of Paris, where much too soon she had learnt that she was nameless, fatherless and motherless, though both unknown father and mother were probably alive, for a good sum of money was paid monthly for her support. Then, when she was twelve years old, this money had stopped, and she had been sent to an industrial school. From there into small service, as a *bonne à tout faire*, to an old childless couple who had finally bought a small house at Douvenay. Her prettiness and intelligence had endeared her to these people, and they had begged her to accompany them. Out of sheer good-nature she had said she would come and see how she liked the country.

And then a miracle had happened. Léon Bissonet, the best-looking as well as the one eligible bachelor in Douvenay, fell in love at first sight with the Parisians' pretty maid. He was then nine-and-twenty, she eighteen, and the struggle with his parents had lasted two whole years.

Under her bedclothes, under her fine linen sheet and light, warm blanket, Mme. Bissonet clenched her hands as she remembered the fierce anger and surprise with which Léon's father and mother had learnt that their cherished son was courting *pour le bon motif* a penniless servant, instead of one of the two well-dowered girls on whom they had fixed their minds. Even now it is not easy for a Frenchman to marry without his parents' consent, and in those days, twenty-two years ago, it was almost impossible.

But Léon Bissonet, with his dogged, secretive, passionate nature, had achieved the impossible, and when they had given way both father and mother, with characteristic French good sense, had taken their daughter-in-law to their hearts. Indeed, before her death Mme. Bissonet *mère*—as she had come to be called—acknowledged that her Léon could not have found a wife more suited to him, or one doing her duty better in the way of life to which she had been so surprisingly called. But not even she suspected how well the two were mated, and how deliciously close was that union, at once so selfish and so selfless, only known to elect lovers.

II.

ALL through the next day Mme. Bissonet listened for the bell which should herald her husband's return. It was trying not to know, even to an hour, when he was coming back. But she remembered that last time he had had to sleep at Chandlieu.

The loneliness of that long day was only broken by the two brief calls of the field postman bearing his usual mass of letters and parcels for the Prince.

The second night Mme. Bissonet slept well and soundly, and she awoke with the happy feeling that Léon would certainly come back to-day—Léon, and very probably the Prince also.

The hour of *déjeuner* sped by without bringing her husband, but about one there came a note to La Maison Bissonet stating that the Prince would be back that afternoon rather late. For a moment she was sorry, not for her own sake but for Léon's. Léon would have liked a quiet night alone in the house. She choked down a sigh, and read again the formal message. It was typewritten, and Mme. Bissonet, though she had seen examples of the work produced by the "writing machine," as it is called in France, was yet sufficiently unfamiliar with it to look thrice at the blue paper. "Mme. Bissonet is informed that his Highness General Prince Botho von Bidingen will reach her house this afternoon about six o'clock."

At two o'clock Mme. Bissonet went up to her room. She lay down on her bed, for she wished to be well and lively this evening. She was rather surprised at her own action, for she very seldom lay down in the daytime; but there seemed nothing to do. Somehow

she did not think her husband would be back before six o'clock. He and the Prince would probably arrive much about the same time.

She had been asleep—how long?—half an hour—an hour?—in deep, dreamless slumber, when she heard the bell above her gate clanging rather insistently.

She leapt to the floor, and thrust her feet—she had very pretty little feet—into her slippers, and ran downstairs.

Of course it was Léon—Léon at last! And then she felt a pang of sharp, almost uncontrollable, disappointment. For it was not Léon after all. Instead of the mayor of Douvenay's lean, virile figure, there stood outside the gate the stumpy form of the German field postman, holding a bulky-looking parcel in his arms.

The poor old Landsturmer's face looked grey with fatigue. This was the third time he had been to her house that day, and Mme. Bissonet told herself indignantly that those haughty Prussian officers down there, in the house on the Grande Place they used as head-quarters, were cruelly uncaring of their men. Mme. Bissonet opened the gate a little way, and held out her arms for the parcel, for it was much too big and bulky to fit into her apron. She smiled, a trifle mechanically, for she felt heavy-hearted and tired herself. But there came no answering smile from Gustav Shenck. Filled with a sudden kindly compunction, the Frenchwoman made the grey-clad soldier a quick sign to stay where he was, and laying the large parcel on the ground she ran indoors and brought him out a tumbler filled with the light, sweet champagne which in those parts costs only a few pence a bottle.

He gulped it down to the last drop. And then his bulging, fat-rimmed eyes actually filled with tears, as he muttered, "*Danke, danke,*" and turned on his heel.

She stooped, picked up the parcel, brought it into her kitchen, and placed it on the table. All at once she grew rather pink, for she saw that it was addressed to "Mme. Léon Bissonet, Maison Bissonet, Douvenay," and that there was stamped deeply on the spongy white paper which formed the covering the various queer black marks of the German Army Field Post.

Women are unreasonable creatures. Yesterday the fact that the Prince had remembered his promise would have given Mme. Bissonet pleasure, but now to-day she felt a little vexed. For one thing it had never occurred to her that he would go and buy her something in the way of wearing apparel, yet that was what he evidently had done. Mme. Bissonet did not trust German taste, neither was she minded to accept a real present from the German General.

She looked round a little nervously, forgetting for the moment that the gate was locked. She hoped she would have time to undo the parcel and put its contents away before her husband came in.

In her haste she took up the long, keen-edged, pointed knife with which she had divided the hare that morning, and which the woman, after cleaning it, had not put away. With it she cut the stout cords which bound the parcel criss-cross-wise.

And then, as she pushed back the stiff outer paper covering of her parcel, there came over Mme. Bissonet a curious sick feeling of fear, for she had caught sight of a piece of stuff which was strangely like the lining of the coat which her husband had been wearing when he left her two days ago.

With fingers which her brain had to drive to their easy task, for all sensation had left them, she removed the inner sheets of paper.

Yes, there was no mistake possible now. Neatly folded up in as small a bulk as was possible were her husband's clothes. The coat, arranged queerly inside out, lay on the top; under it were the waistcoat, the trousers, the braces, the collar too, and his black tie. The shirt, however, was lacking, and so were Léon's boots and socks, and his tall hat.

She began lifting the things, one after the other, on to that part of the kitchen table which was clear, and suddenly she espied, pinned on to the trousers, a piece of paper. It was folded in two, and when she unfolded it she saw that it was covered with several lines of typewriting, just as had been the message she had received concerning the Prince's return. But this time the superscription was slightly different in its wording, for what ran across the top left-hand corner of that oblong piece of paper read:—

Madame Veuve Bissonet,
Maison Bissonet,
Douvenay.

What a strange, what a horrible mistake for some stupid German Landsturm clerk to have made! Still, she waited a moment before she forced her eyes to read the lines which ran below that incorrect address:—

Madame,—You are informed that your spouse, Léon Bissonet, mayor of Douvenay, was found to have concealed about his person a letter addressed to a woman in Paris, giving information as to the whereabouts of General Prince Botho von Bidingen and his staff. He

"SHE SPRANG AT HIM WITH A HOARSE CRY OF RAGE AND ANGUISH."

was court-martialled last night, September 28th, condemned to death, and duly executed this morning, September 29th. He was buried in his shirt. His hat has been mislaid, his boots and socks have been requisitioned for a French civilian prisoner. Herewith please find the rest

of his garments. His watch and the money found on his person will be returned to you in due course.

Mme. Bissonet was still staring down at the piece of paper in her hand when there came a stir, the sound of two motors stopping in the street outside, and a confused babel of laughter and talk.

The bell rang, an insistent, impatient peal, but the woman standing in the kitchen of La Maison Bissonet did not stir. She stayed exactly where she was, and not a muscle moved. Again the bell above the locked gate rang out very loudly this time, as if strong, eager hands were tugging at the steel chain-pull outside.

Suddenly she let go the piece of paper, and it fluttered down on to the floor. Then she put out a hand which trembled convulsively, and stroked her husband's coat.

There was a pause—a long, long pause—and then there burst on her ears queer scrambling sounds and then a thud. This meant that someone had been hitched up on to the wall by the side of the gate, and slipping down the roof of one of the outbuildings had jumped down into the courtyard.

A moment later the Prince's body-servant, a young Saxon with whom Mme. Bissonet had always been on friendly terms, opened wide the kitchen door. He stared at the woman within with slow-growing astonishment. Though unobservant, he yet felt amazed to see the change that three days had wrought in Mme. Bissonet's appearance. She no longer looked pretty, or even healthy. Her eyes were bloodshot, her face was white with a dreadful pallor, and though her lips moved she did not speak. He told himself that something had evidently upset her dreadfully, but short as was that youth's experience of war, he had already seen many amazing things in the last few weeks. And now his business was to unlock the gate.

"The key?" he said, hurriedly. "The key, madame? His Highness is outside, and he has already waited too long."

She fumbled blindly at her waist, and at last handed him the key. A moment later the noise caused by a number of men clattering across the courtyard penetrated her brain. She knew subconsciously that they were making their way to the front door of the house. But all that was left working of her shattered mind was set on remembering the exact wording of the letter which had been written in such careless haste, and which against his better judgment she had made her husband take with him to Chandlieu. Yes, she remembered now that she had written down the fact of this Prussian Prince General being in their house. It was that one sentence which had made her Léon's murderess.

And then there came over the distraught woman an intense, scarcely sane hatred of General Prince von Bidingen. As in a flash, something he had said to her with a jovial laugh only last week came back to her. A French aeroplane had come whirling overhead, and he had exclaimed, "It's a good thing for you, madame, that our friend up there does not know that a Prussian General and his staff are in La Maison Bissonet, or there would soon not be much left of your house." Unseen by him, she had shaken her head gaily, for Mme. Bissonet had never set on her courteous enemy the exaggerated military value he evidently set on himself, and which she now believed had been the determining cause of —her mind refused to finish the sentence.

A shadow fell athwart the kitchen, and, turning round, she saw the Prince's burly form filling up the open doorway. He was laughing that round, gutturai laugh which Germans laugh, and he came forward and stood inside the kitchen, all unknowing of the hideous tragedy in which he had been an unknowing participant.

"Well, madame, I hope you have something good for my dinner. I have missed your cooking the last three days, and——"

Mme. Bissonet never knew that what the Prince was going to say was simply, "and I hear that your husband has been away. If I had known that I would have picked him up when driving through Chandlieu and brought him home." For while he was speaking she, with her right hand behind her back, had been stealthily feeling under the stiff rustling paper for the long, keen-edged, pointed knife with which she had cut the string. As the Prince uttered the word "and," she whipped her hand round and sprang at him with a hoarse, vengeful cry of rage and anguish.

So sudden, so forceful was the impact that he was sent reeling back against the wall, and the two men who rushed into the kitchen a few moments later were put to it to withdraw the knife from out of the frightful wound.

For a little more than two years now Mme. Bissonet has been confined in the criminal lunatic asylum at Zell-Hanover. But she is within sight of the end of her troubles, for very soon she will be quite mad.

THE SPORTING SPIRIT.

By HYLTON CLEAVER.

Illustrated by F. Gillett, R.I.

I.

THAT which had always chiefly attracted the little boys who, once upon a time, used to come to tea with Johnny on Saturday afternoons had been his father. In appearance this astonishing gentleman was so very like a coachman that most folk took him for one when they passed him in the street; as he had not, you see, any of those distinguishing marks of his calling by which such folk could know him—the hammered nose, the cauliflower ear. His fists were certainly a little gnarled, but over these he wore shamefacedly a pair of buttoned gloves whenever he walked out; whilst, although he was very small, he held his head so high that he might very well have been the warden of a church or something intensely laudable like that. So the little boys who came so rapturously to tea were in this light habitually disappointed.

As it was, few folk who did not know could believe that such an upright, grave-eyed little man could be a champion pugilist.

But in other ways also he was remarkable, for he had saved not only when saving was so difficult that only magnetic purpose could have kept him resolute, but even when success might easily have led him to extravagance; and he had lived his life apart from those who might more naturally have been associates of his, simply because he was determined that when the time came for Johnny to set out upon that road which carries a boy subconsciously to gentlemanliness, no dissolute professional pug should bring discredit upon a polished son.

These things had not been easy. And now he sat with head bowed sorrowfully and shoulders oddly hunched, whilst in the flickering firelight there showed against his sombre suit touches of genteel white that were his collar and his cuffs. To him, such little tokens had been all-significant of true respectability, and respectability had been his one obsession.

One who came at this moment into the room on tip-toe would have thought he slept, yet his eyes were open and were coldly set. From a chair in the corner a woman suddenly spoke. She had sat since tea had been cleared away watching this, her astonishing brother, with large, round, wondering eyes. Time and again her lips had moved as if she would speak, but no sound had come, until at last her courage swelled, and now an awed voice broke the uncanny silence.

"Perhaps," said she, "he didn't mean to do it."

He looked up slowly and straightened his back.

"It's natural in a woman to stand up for a lad," said he, "and you've been like a mother to Johnny so long that I don't blame you, Annie. But you haven't often seen eye to eye with me. You've never understood the foolish hopes that used to keep me saving, saving, always saving; you've never quite fathomed why I meant him to go to a public school."

He was picking his words, speaking them incisively.

"I never said you were wrong," said she.

"You never said I was right," he answered, "either. I don't think you ever considered the matter."

"I knew that if you wanted it so, it would be so." And she smiled upon him philosophically.

Johnny's father shook his head. He realized, maybe, that no woman can extend true sympathy to a man who has once shown himself to be the stronger willed. Even in time of sorrow he must content himself with her respect.

"Lord Barries knew," said he, "else he would never have left his money as he did. You remember the tag to our legacy, 'A mite towards the making of a man.' And without that mite all my saving, all my sacrifice, could never have sent Johnny to Rainhurst in time. The windfall came just at the eleventh hour. Johnny was sixteen when he went to a public school."

His sister nodded her head, once, twice, appreciatively.

"All my life," said he, with sudden emotion, "I wanted that. I was never a gentleman. I was a professional pug. I've tried to be respectable, tried to keep a home to which he would never afterwards have been afraid to bring his friends. But I—I hadn't any polish, you see, and it's polish that tells. A lad gets that at a public school. And so in the end he went. You remember? It's barely a year ago. Well, time passed, and at last Aldershot came, and when they chose him to fight for Rainhurst, it was the proudest day I'd ever known. You understand what it meant? He was to go to a meeting of the sons of gentlemen from all over the country; he was to box against them, as one of them, for the honour of a great English school—a school that has sent noblemen into the world. That was my son—and my son fouled."

"Perhaps he didn't mean to do it," said she again. She could think of nothing else to say. Nor was she very clever in debate.

"The papers called it intentional," he answered, harshly. "I almost wish I had gone myself to take care of him; but I was afraid—afraid that in some way I might be wrongly dressed, or bring some ridicule upon the boy. And I was over-anxious, too. Besides, whether it was his fault or no, it makes no difference. Since I taught him from my bended knees to use his fists, I've drilled it into his head that no boy in all the world must fight more cleanly than mine; that if he made but one mistake, there would be but one comment made by busybodies."

There came a little pause. Disconsolately he turned away. And then he added, humbly:—

"His father was a bruiser; of course he fouled."

Annie moved quietly in her chair.

"Peter," she said, "I think I can hear a cab."

Without a word he got slowly to his feet and stood, a rigid little figure, beside his chair, his head held very high, his hands clenched by his sides. Always he had looked to this day when he should greet his son, Champion of the Public Schools, should wring his hand with the full, fervent pride that only a father knows, should clap his gnarled fist on the lad's broad shoulder and hold him at arm's length, joyfully, and see in him at last—a gentleman.

Instead, this; and the cab was drawing up outside. He heard quick words of welcome and a little hush, a whispered question and an answer. There came a pause. Then—it seemed a very long time—the handle of the door was turned, and in the light of the hall lamp his son stood, and stood proudly, on the threshold, a classic athlete, fair, clean-limbed, like father, like son.

For a moment neither spoke. The father still stood stiffly in the shadow, very stern, very grave.

"Well, Johnny?" he said at last.

"How do you do, father?" said the boy.

The father coughed, moved one foot a little.

"I think," he said, in a low voice, "your supper is ready in the parlour."

So Johnny turned and went.

The climax did not come that night. Peter Dell did not wish mere harsh words. His pride, his quaint, astonishing dignity dictated another course. So all that evening he, for his part, sat by the fire with never a light. Once only Annie (and Annie had kept his house for him since his wife had passed away) came in to wish him good night, and stood hesitantly by his side, wondering if it were any use at all to plead again. For she knew that her brother's aloofness was more foreboding than a single hour of the flustered rage that is the sign of another man's impotence.

She felt that Peter had come to some decision, that he would somehow deal with this situation mercilessly, but very practically. And in the end she merely said, wistfully:—

"Good night, Peter; Johnny has gone to bed."

Peter rose and, half turning towards the mantelpiece, bade her good night.

"Will you tell Johnny," said he, "that we will have our usual bout before our bath to-morrow?"

The following morning Peter waited for his son in the outhouse that was their miniature gymnasium, a lean little figure in shoes and a long grey dressing-gown, until there came the sound of the house-door closing and a light step coming along the stony path. Then, when Johnny came in and said, "Halloa, father!" just as he had always used to do, Peter did not turn, but merely nodded his head in greeting, and held the ropes of the ring apart.

Johnny looked at him oddly and threw off his overcoat. Then he went into the ring and stood, in vest and shorts and soft black boxing boots, with arms akimbo. Peter went to a cupboard and took out the gloves, came to the ring-side and held out a pair for his

son, tied the strings, still silently, and took off his dressing-gown.

Then he, too, came into the ring, and Johnny helped him on with his gloves. All this was done methodically as if to kill time. Then he looked away and walked quietly across the ring.

Always before his father had greeted him fondly at these morning spars; had asked more often than not how he had slept, had slapped him affectionately on the shoulders as he put on the gloves. To-day it was different.

As if by mutual consent they faced each other and put up their hands. Time was when Peter had gone on his knees before this lad, bidding him pummel his face at will, being content to tap him lightly, if sometimes his guard grew careless; but by degrees he had accustomed Johnny to facing him as he stood, the son an inch above his father and with a slightly longer reach, but Peter was encased in sinew as a knight in armour, and was very difficult to hurt.

In spite of this there was to-day something a little awesome, a little uncanny, to Johnny in his father moving round him with the easy, watchful poise of a perfect athlete whom passing years will not easily make old.

Johnny rose on his toes and led tentatively. Twice his left flashed in and out, rapier-like, touching his father to action. Then he led once again, and Peter slipped the blow neatly and drove home his own right hard. Johnny came in again, uncaring. His father met him with two straight drives that sent him reeling to a corner; he staggered, recovered, came back. Suddenly merciless, Peter Dell countered his lead with stunning swiftness, caught the boy off his balance, and toppled him on to his back.

Johnny slowly got up.

An angry hectic flush showed on his cheeks as he put up his hands again.

His father said nothing at all; but he waited, and there was a curious light in his eyes as Johnny joined issue again.

This time the boy came in with unexpected vigour; there was a bitter rally; he rained blows savagely on Peter—quick, skilful blows that needed clever parrying, that kept Peter moving watchfully this way and that, his feet tip-tapping and his gloves and elbows swiftly working in defence.

And then, precipitately, Peter's rigid left shot out at the same psychological second that Johnny came in, and jolted his head far back. Then, as he stumbled blindly sideways, Peter's right foot slipped forward and his right hand swung. So another blow landed on Johnny's chin, and he fell and lay for a moment breathing heavily. And then he got shakily to his feet. Already he understood. In the old days he had loved these jolly morning scraps. They had taught him much and hardened him to gruellings—there had always been casual tips and friendly counsellings—pearls of fistic wisdom. He had never before felt the full strength of his father.

Something vaguely desperate, but quietly brave, stirred and rose in Johnny's soul. He put up his hands again and stood as steadily as he could. For a second or two he eyed his father dourly. And suddenly he darted in.

Peter met him as he came with that classic left, jolted his chin once, twice, three times. Johnny ducked and swerved in again. Once more that callous, irresistible left kept him back. He broke away sobbing, gathered his strength again, and slammed an unorthodox right forlornly at his father's heart. It glanced past the mark and he overbalanced. Peter swung round and hit him with a cruel, calculated blow under the lobe of the ear as he tripped.

With dim, drifting senses Johnny swayed. Then, though he knew that all his own skill and knowledge, even his youth and training, were useless against this master of his art, his grit rose again and he kept his feet bravely and faced Peter with panting breath and unsteady poise. He caught a glimpse of the older man's face and saw that it was oddly set, and that his stern grey eyes were fixed upon his own.

Then, for the last time, Johnny came in; and now he fought with a wild-cat fury and a superhuman pluck, battling like one possessed. And his two hands drove and swung and punched in desperation at the body and the head, caring no whit for whatever blows he took himself if he could only punish Peter.

And Peter drew away and kept him off with skilful parrying, with trick for trick, until the ultimate opening came. And then with a steady eye he hit Johnny one terrible blow on the point of the jaw and stood back as he fell, beaten, to the floor.

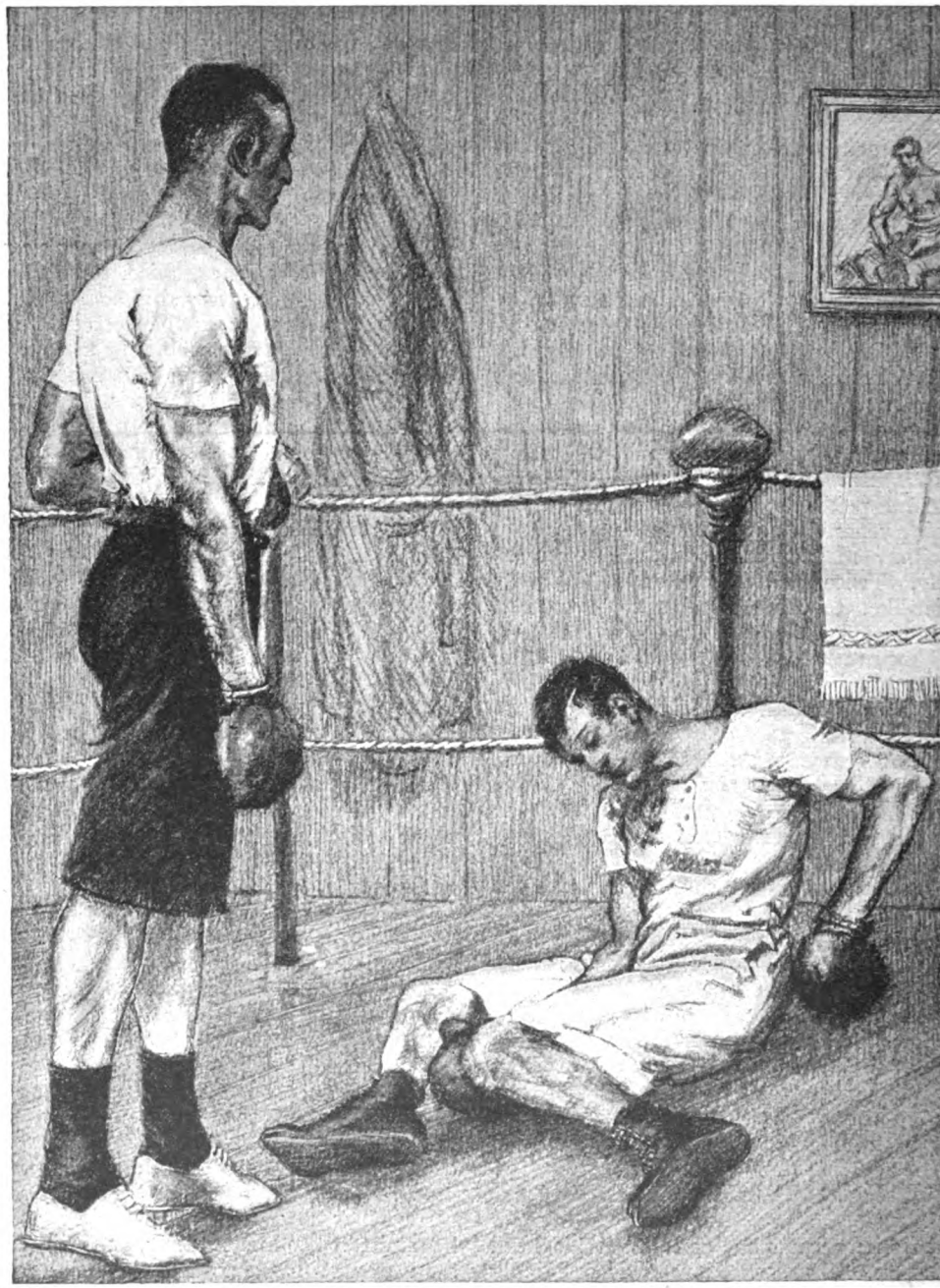
And when he had watched him for a moment he gave a quaint, heart-broken little gulp, and lifted the lad, who was as big as he, and carried him to a chair, where for a moment he ministered to him tenderly, and so Johnny soon opened his eyes and looked glassily about him.

"Sit still a moment," said Peter. "There's something I want to say to you."

He spoke constrainedly, as if he were half afraid of his true voice.

He said :—

"I have beaten you now as you should have beaten Chinney of Charterhouse. Instead, you hit him low in a clinch. I have asked you nothing ; there's nothing I want to hear. But the papers have published the news to all the sporting world that I sent my son to a public school, and that he fought at Aldershot and fouled; and in clubs and schools and country houses all over England they're



'PETER HIT JOHNNY ONE TERRIBLE BLOW AND STOOD BACK AS HE FELL, BEATEN, TO THE FLOOR."

saying to-day, 'He was the son of a bruiser. Of course, he was up to all the tricks.' You have broken your father's heart. I meant you to be a gentleman. I stifled my natural life and made myself an oddity for you and your chance in life. You've thrown your chance to the dogs. You can never lift up your head again at Rainhurst. I can never lift up mine in the sporting world. Well, you may have your defence, but you can have no excuse, and so I've thrashed you now to teach you the lesson of your life, and I pray to God you will learn it."

And then—he had never spoken eloquently before—he turned and went out of the shed.

And Johnny did not come to breakfast, and he did not come to lunch, and when in the afternoon Annie Dell crept up to his room, a little fearsomely, and knocked and opened the door, Johnny had run away.

At the very first Peter's pride kept him stern, and he went his way with his head held high and his shoulders squared. Nobody in all the world had ever sympathized with his very foolish dreams, or thought him other than an odd man, lofty above his station. Only the nobleman who had backed Peter Dell in all his fights had ever helped him in his saving for his son. So when the news went forth, softly at first, but gathering swiftness as it passed from mouth to mouth, none thought him other than a too harsh parent, or blamed the boy one-half so surely as they blamed his father.

And in the beginning he bore his trouble stoically.

Now, the calendar's first day of winter is not so very bitter, but the long stretch of nights that follow so slowly, growing, by gradual changes, more dark, more cruel—these kill. So it was not until day upon day interminable had added mercilessly to his burden that Peter broke at last beneath its weight. Indeed, two years had passed before Annie came unexpectedly upon him in the dusk of the evening and found him sitting very still, just as, she remembered, he had waited his son's home-coming on that other night. And when he did not look up at her entry or stir in his seat she came beside him, and for some reason, purely instinctive, laid her hand gently upon his shoulder. And still he did not notice her; then she saw at last that his eyes were moist, and that his face was softer in its lines than ever before.

She said, "What is it, Peter?" almost as if she thought it might possibly be the toothache. She was like that. A dear soul, but she had never understood. He got up from his chair, and went to the window and looked out.

Then he said, simply enough, "Johnny is in the Army. He is a corporal of Hussars."

She looked at him dumbfounded. She said in a whisper, "H-how do you know?"

"He is also a pugilist," he answered. "Last night I saw him win a fight at the Ring."

She was a little frightened. He spoke so very gently that to-day he struck her as being somehow an altogether different Peter Dell. He seemed more simple and less rigid; even his collar and his cuffs were inconspicuous.

Then Peter was speaking again.

"He is known as Corporal Dell," said he. "Evidently he—he isn't ashamed of his name."

And then he dropped into a chair and buried his face in his hands. Annie looked at him fixedly; then, altogether unable to rise to the occasion, she turned and went rapidly out of the room.

And when she too was alone she wept.

In the days that followed—days that to Annie were like the coming of a second girlhood—Peter roamed his home restlessly, stood for long spells at windows, and neglected meals, and to Annie these were first simple signs, pregnant with hope of reconciliation.

They did not actually speak of Johnny, but they thought, perhaps, more constantly of him for that. In the end, however, courage came suddenly to Annie, and one morning she precipitately fired questions across the breakfast table, breathless with ecstasy.

She said:—

"Is he well-known, Peter? Will he be very famous? Did he see you?"

Peter looked at her with his habitual gravity, and answered categorically:—

"He is a brilliant boxer, Annie."

"You—you taught him," said she quickly.

"He has created a stir in the sporting world," continued Peter, "and is thought a most likely candidate for the Lonsdale Belt. He did not see me."

Already her courage was failing her, but before it wholly died Annie put one more hurried question, and this was just, "Has he changed very much?"

"Hardly at all," said Peter. "He is a little older, a little bigger. He is nineteen, you see."

Then he added: "I shall be out to-night; don't trouble to wait up."

She whispered an answer and sipped gratefully at her tea, but it never occurred to her

at all that Peter was possibly going to see Johnny again. And Peter never told her, but in a month's time Johnny had won the feather-weight Lonsdale Belt, and he told her that.

Maybe he feared she would notice the fact for herself in the papers and tell him, when he would be under the awkward constraint of having to answer, "Yes, I know."

So he spoke first.

And then she committed her very greatest blunder. She rose at the bait. She said:—

"Now you can truly be proud of him, Peter. You'll make friends—now."

He spun round on his heel, glared at her, and then broke out:—

"Proud of him? Proud of him? What in the name of the Almighty do you mean?"

There came an awful momentary hush. Then she shrank away, stammering, and turned and fled from the room.

II.

JOHNNY lay back in his chair and breathed deeply, the while two satellites, one small and sandy-haired, the other tall and with an air of chronic gloom, dabbed at him feverishly with sponges. A third man beat the air wildly with a towel. Before the bell went for the twentieth and last round the sandy little man laid a hand upon his arm.

"Stick 'is rush now," he beseeched, "till you see me signalling; then go in—'e's tired, like a cab 'orse. You've got 'im dangling."

There was a little cheering as Johnny went forward, a sudden hush as the other man came at him, then all in a flash Johnny had been hit twice. He replied with steady confidence and stood his ground, grunting a little as blows got home. The other man was strong and hirsute, a hook-nosed youth with a Yankee crouch and cruel lines round his mouth; very different from Johnny. But Johnny was favourite with the great assembly that was there to see the fight, and this thought kept him cool. As another blow got home he worked his man round and glanced swiftly at his own corner; the sandy little man was at last twitching his eyebrows. So Johnny went in. His left flashed twice in and out, then he was over the other's guard with his right and driving him back with swift half-arm jabs—he slipped a swing at his chin from short range and peppered him blithely with long lefts and a supporting right. And then, as he felt that he was gloriously winning and that for the second time he had defeated the man who had won the belt but once, a sudden vicious upper-cut came at him from nowhere and knocked him a foot into the air and over on to his back. And there he lay. A roar of amazement came from the house, but he was scarcely conscious of it. He lay writhing a little, half on his side, trying to find the fast revolving floor with his hand. At last he caught at it and levered himself up. He saw his opponent cloaked in a mist across the ring. He stood up, swaying; felt for the ropes to steady himself. He could not see the sandy little man anywhere, could not find his own corner—he felt desperately alone, saw the evil grin of the other man coming at him on an extended neck. And then suddenly out of the buzz of voices that came from the auditorium one voice, a slow and steady voice, called to him. It was a very long time since he had heard that voice; but he had loved it.

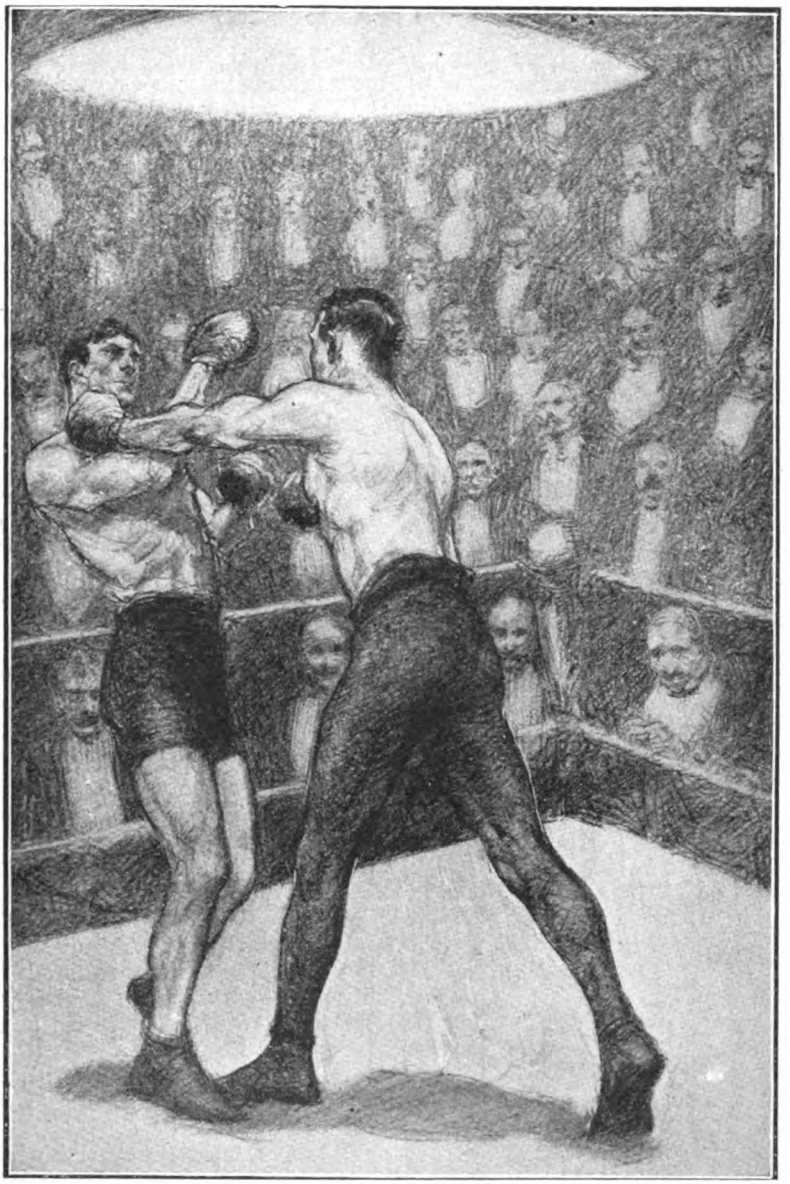
He turned as eagerly as a child and tried to smile. For the words had come very clearly; the voice had said:—

"That doesn't hurt, Johnny, boy; hit him again."

And that was how his father had always called upon his pluck since the very first day he had taught him boxing. For just one giddy moment Johnny searched for his father's face, wistfully but very foolishly, and so, of course, Joe Kelly gladly hit him under the heart and knocked him out.

Peter went home alone. He did not want to see Johnny that night. There were reasons, of course. One was that he felt his dignity had suffered, and his dignity was his own—he had lost his head at a moment that was exciting certainly, but that was one when he should most emphatically have kept it, and so retained his lofty pose upon a pedestal. Besides, at the National Sporting Club, a staid, respectable gentleman is not expected to rise in his seat, no matter how tense the moment, and call loudly upon a contestant in the ring. These things are not done. Also, by his idiocy, he had assisted Johnny to lose a fight that he should certainly have won. Peter knew all these things, and he felt as well that all eyes had turned upon him and had found him out. So he went away shamefacedly, whilst they were picking up his boy.

For days that ran into weeks he turned it all over in his mind, sitting alone in an armchair by the window. But nothing came of it. Between him and his son false pride still stood, spectre-like, barring the way of reconciliation. And he did not like to think that an unguarded moment had found him out and shown him unmasked before this



"HE SLIPPED A SWING AT HIS CHIN FROM SHORT RANGE AND PEPPERED HIM BLITHELY WITH LONG LEFTS AND A SUPPORTING RIGHT."

very son. So he climbed back on to his shaky pedestal and waited, trying to make believe that it was Johnny's fault, yet knowing well enough that it was not. And time went on, and he did not go to Johnny and Johnny did not come to him.

And then war came in irony, as a maker of peace. Before the summer had properly come to autumn, Johnny had gone to France.

The days that came thereafter found Peter a little older, searching anxiously for occasional grey hairs as he made his morning toilet, yet finding very few. And Annie passed through her second girlhood, disappointed and surprised, and she, too, became a little older in her looks. Each, in secret, scanned the papers for news of Johnny, corporal of Hussars, but neither spoke of him.

Then one crisp October morning Annie walked into the garden and saw with surprise that the outhouse door, which had always been closed since Johnny had run away, was opened again. She drew near, crossed over the path, and looked in, then she came on tiptoe to the door and stood open-mouthed and staring.

For Peter was there in shirt-sleeves, very white against his gentlemanly trousers, and behold, he was dancing nimbly from corner to corner of the ring with his hands up and his arms moving easily before him. Now he drove strongly at an imaginary enemy, now swiftly upper-cut the air, and all the while he was dancing, dancing, grave-eyed and very earnest.

She stood watching. Hating the ring and Peter's calling, she had never before seen him box, had never seen even Johnny in the ring.

Peter had always respected her feelings in this matter. This sight was wholly new to her. He stopped suddenly and dropped his

hands; but not to rest, for now he was walking rapidly round the ring with little beads of sweat upon his brow; and he went round and round with his head held high as ever, until suddenly he saw her and stopped short.

She felt that she was called upon to speak, that it was hers to offer an explanation. She found her voice with an effort. She said, "What is it, Peter?" with considerable concern.

He came towards her, stopped, and faced her with his gloved hands on his hips.

"I think I can do it," he said. "I think I can do it. Six weeks or so would bring an immense change, and really I am in fine condition."

He spoke with a joyousness altogether new.

"What do you mean?" said she.

"They are trying to cheat my boy," he said. "The man who beat him by a chance blow in his second fight for the belt has arranged to fight another for it in two months' time. This man would have stood no chance, and Kelly would have won the belt outright. Now the other fellow has broken his hand and has called the matter off. Kelly is claiming the belt by default."

"Well, but what does it matter?" said Annie, plaintively. "Why are you doing this?"

"Because my boy is fighting at the Front instead of at home," said he. "He will lose his chance. If Johnny were at home now he would beat this man Kelly as sure as I stand here."

He took Annie by the arm.

"I stake all my judgment of fisticuffs," he said, earnestly, "on the certainty that if those two met again Johnny would win. And they are trying to cheat him out of it." He did not add that only his own hot-headedness had lost Johnny the battle before.

"Why, Peter?" said Annie, mechanically.

"I lay awake last night," said he, "and thought it all out, and this morning I have tested myself. And now I am going to challenge Kelly and beat him myself and hold the belt for Johnny till he comes home."

Annie just gaped a little more.

"W-w-what for?" said she, aghast.

"For the honour of the Dells," he answered, "father and son."

And then Annie knew that he was mad, and that she must keep a stiff upper lip and set herself to work to humour him.

III.

He came slowly into the ring. Perhaps this was to emphasize his utter coolness, but it was withal a very fitting way for a gentleman to bear himself in this the last phase of a struggle between a too-proud father and a too-proud son. As he sat down casually in his chair there sprang in a nimble little man, sandy about the hair, who forthwith set to work with bioscopic speed to operate on Peter's legs.

For many weeks this little enthusiast had lived with Peter, making himself a very true philosopher and friend. He had come the very first day that the news of Peter's return to the ring had gone forth, and had beseeched him to accept his help.

"I seconded your boy," he had pointed out. "You and I together can beat Kelly, but you couldn't do it alone; there's things I can show, even to you."

And Peter had taken the proffered hand.

The little group who were in the ring began to leave it, and at last it was "Seconds out" and "Time." Then Peter stood up proudly to battle for his son.

Kelly came at him quickly, crouched and evil, his arms and shoulders all a-quiver with eagerness, his left hand popping out here and there tentatively, seeking an opening, and as Peter stepped watchfully round him the rounded muscles under his skin moved as smoothly and easily as a lad's, for which the sandy little man took credit.

So they spun out the first round until at the very end Peter nipped in suddenly with his left and was well away before the other reached him, so that the force of Kelly's blow was wasted. Then the bell rang and Peter went sedately to his seat.

"Very good," said the sandy little man. "You see what I mean. All that elbow work—that prancing way of his."

He gabbled on enthusiastically, blithely, and all the while he was slapping Peter and easing the action of his muscles, whilst now and again a hasty ejaculation urged his willing assistants to even more vigorous work with the towel.

Peter hardly seemed to have listened. His whole expression was lost in concentration; and as soon as Kelly came up he started earnestly working for a chance to hit. Twice his left got home, popping in just as briskly as in the first round, and twice Kelly came after him vengefully and found his system of defence impregnable.

And Peter knew it. He had the utter confidence that comes to the man who all

his life has been a trier. He knew that in all his ring experience he had left no stone unturned. There was nothing he did not know. And because of this he realized the danger of taking his man too easily. He could not deny that Kelly was dangerous. Just now, when the strain had not begun to tell, they were a perfect match, and when the second round was ended hearty and steady applause told that the men who had come to see the fight were satisfied, and that they found it good.

So when the third round and the fourth had similarly passed, and Peter had sat down again in his chair, the sandy little man bent low and spoke the word.

"I'm watching 'im," said he. "Go a little bit 'arder this time, Peter, a little bit 'arder. Get me?"

Peter nodded, and his straight mouth grew a little tighter. He suffered the sandy little man's ministrations indifferently. All the while he was watching Kelly; every move he made, every expression on his face meant something—however small—to Peter. Peter could not afford to give away a single point. He was old. Already he was feeling the effects of the four swift rounds. He knew that twenty would be far too long a journey. All depended on his ability to knock this other fellow out quickly. Yet he found the other fellow guessing as much and keeping up the cleverest defence he could—reckoning to tire Peter out.

So the fifth round found him still parrying Peter's blows persistently, still biding his time. Gradually Peter worked up his attack. Once he had been thought the fastest boxer of all time. If he could get back his speed for this one great occasion he might win by that alone—but could he? He tried. At first he found the effort detracted a little from his strength. He was hitting more often, but not quite so hard. But he stuck to it. It meant such a very great deal to Peter. So, as the fifth round neared the end, he found himself slipping by degrees into his own priceless style. His left peppered Kelly mercilessly, disturbing his stupid grin—his right was jabbing and jolting his chin each time he stumbled. Joe Kelly went thoughtfully to his corner at the end of the spell, and it took a little sponge-work to bring back his smile. Peter, watching earnestly, saw too that he was bleeding at the mouth—and Kelly had not hurt him yet.

"Good work," said his sandy counsellor; "does the 'eart good. Hit him *'ard*, you know, Peter. Mustn't flick."

Peter rose again for the sixth round. Already it was a question how long he could keep it up; but his heart was swelling with pride; he was fighting for his son at the Front. They should not take the belt away; and that thought kept him resolute.

Again he darted at his man and his glove flew at the other in rapid, accurate blows that were a skilful method of defence. And then suddenly, in that vicious way that had startled Johnny, Kelly had stumbled, swerved, and slung his right hand at Peter as he came on; and Peter ran into it. He fell back, recovered, strove desperately to keep up his speed, but before he was fairly started, Kelly was on top of him, hitting him on the head and about the ribs with all the strength he had. Peter drew back and found himself in a corner. He heard hoarse shouting from the house, realized that he was trapped. He kept up his hands and fought back gallantly. Kelly was too strong. Repeated blows at his head were dazing him; valiantly he kept up his left hand, but Kelly was growing stronger—or he weaker—every second, and at last his guard was broken and a stunning drive took him full in the face. He sank on to the ropes. Then, as Kelly came in to finish the fight, the bell went and the sandy little man, quivering with anxiety, was by his side, comforting him with words of praise.

Yet, thereafter the fight took on a different aspect. This alarming episode had the effect of steadying Peter considerably. He fought for the next two rounds more as he would have sparred in a gymnasium, with a classic poise and a steady eye, and kept Kelly out with a more skilful defence than ever. But in the ninth he tried again. He was undoubtedly tired. He could get back all but his youth and his youthful stamina, and this was just what Kelly had in abundance. So now they met for the first time in a real fight for the upper hand in attack. Peter fought defiantly, bringing into play all his speed and sureness; Kelly hit hard; and at the end each went wearily, unsteadily, to his corner.

"Can you stick it?" asked the sandy little man. "Can you stay 'im out?"

"Aye," said Peter slowly, knowing he could not.

Peter rose again; his legs were a little cramped, his shoulders tired. There seemed a little extra weight in the gloves. He lifted them bravely and went in. Kelly came forward with a sprightly step and met him. What his seconds had told Kelly, Peter did not know, but he guessed. Kelly was going

to rush in. Kelly thought he was tired. He was not tired. He began to dance round on his toes as if to convince the onlookers that it was sheer nonsense to suppose his strength was giving out. And then suddenly, almost before he had persuaded himself, Kelly had landed in his eye and knocked him back. He recovered quickly and his hands began to move again with their instinctive speed. Kelly was on him again, and by some means had hit him in the ribs and winded him. Again he tried to dance. Above all he must convince this man that he was full of beans. He led at Kelly, but Kelly seemed to brush the blows aside and again he drove at his face. Peter slipped the blow and countered. But he could not hurt Kelly. And he wanted to hurt him. Moreover, Kelly was coming at him strongly, he was punching him steadily in the ribs and under the heart; now and again he blinded him with a blow in the face. His own guard seemed absurdly ineffective. He began to sway a little, heard distant shouting, realized that he was growing giddy. He had never before been knocked out in his life—was this it? A helpless sob rose in his throat. He was old—too old. He spun round on his heel as one blow drove him and reeled again as another sent him back. Kelly's grin was fairly distorting his face. He hated it, strove to strike it away. Again a blow came full in his face, and he nearly fell—and then suddenly he caught a glimpse of his own corner. The sandy little man was beating the air hysterically with his hand. His eyebrows were twitching. He was mouthing words. For the first time since he had known him, Peter came suddenly to the conclusion that the sandy little man was a fool. Then a merciless blow swung to the point of his jaw and he reeled and fell—and lay whilst they counted him out—whilst they cheated Johnny out of the belt.

IV.

They sent him back to Annie, humble and bruised, and very tired, and she looked at him with patient sorrow.

For some days he sat silently in his favourite chair beside the window, with his head sunk on his hand and a lost look in his eyes, and scarcely ate at all, and Annie felt vaguely sorry and unhappy, not knowing what to do for the best. Sometimes a knock came at the door, and she found a journalist come to ask if Peter would fight again, and what he thought of Kelly. Once it was the sandy little man come to tea. And then one day, when she went listlessly to answer such a knock, she had scarcely opened the door when she fell back with a low, incredulous cry as Johnny came in. He took her cheeks between his hands and kissed them.

Then after a minute he said:—

"Where's father?"

She looked at him sadly, holding him to her.

"Oh, Johnny, he's been fighting," she said, much as she would speak of a naughty schoolboy.

"I know," said he; "I heard about it yesterday. That's why I've come."

"Oh, I'm so *glad*, Johnny," she said, with a sigh, "so glad," and looked at him tenderly and patted his hands.

"I'm home on leave," he answered, and smiled upon her.

Next moment the door that led from the garden into the hall was opened, and Peter himself stood there, and the wintry sun was glinting upon his scanty hair, showing up his lines, but despite his simple way he looked just kingly as he stopped and stared.

"Halloa, dear old dad! What in the world have you been doing with your face?"

Peter came close and held out his hand. He had paled a little.

"I'd meant to stop them taking that belt while you were away, Johnny," said he, with a deprecating little smile. "I thought of keeping it till you came home again, and then giving it up to you. I—I thought I could win it."

"Dear old dad!" he answered. "I know. I came too late to stop you, but I heard all about it in London. It's just about that that I've come to tell you. I—I sha'n't be able to fight again, I'm afraid, and I—I think p'r'aps it's just as well to let Kelly keep the thing."

"Not fight again? Why not?" demanded Peter; and then suddenly, "Have you been wounded, Johnny?"

Johnny shook his head.

"They've given me a commission," he said, quite simply, "so you see it wouldn't be quite——"

Somehow it was reward enough to watch his father's face.

First there came over it a look of sheer wonder, almost of disbelief; then a slow light of royal pride as certain words came gradually to his mind, and he looked away and his eyes were moist, and at last he said, steadily:—

"An officer—and a gentleman."

He did not seem to be with them or of them for a little while. His soul had soared, and presently his lips began to move as if he were repeating those noble words ever so proudly,

over and over again, and all the while a smile was slowly creeping into his saddened face.

"A commission, Johnny?" he said, at last. "A commission?"

"Yes!" said Johnny.

"Why have they given you that, my boy?" he asked, very humbly.

Johnny hesitated.

"I suppose they noticed me somehow," he said, at last, "and there was a fellow, an officer in the regiment, who was at Rainhurst and remembered me. Perhaps he mentioned it."

"Was it because they found you had been to a public school, then, Johnny?" said Peter, wistfully.

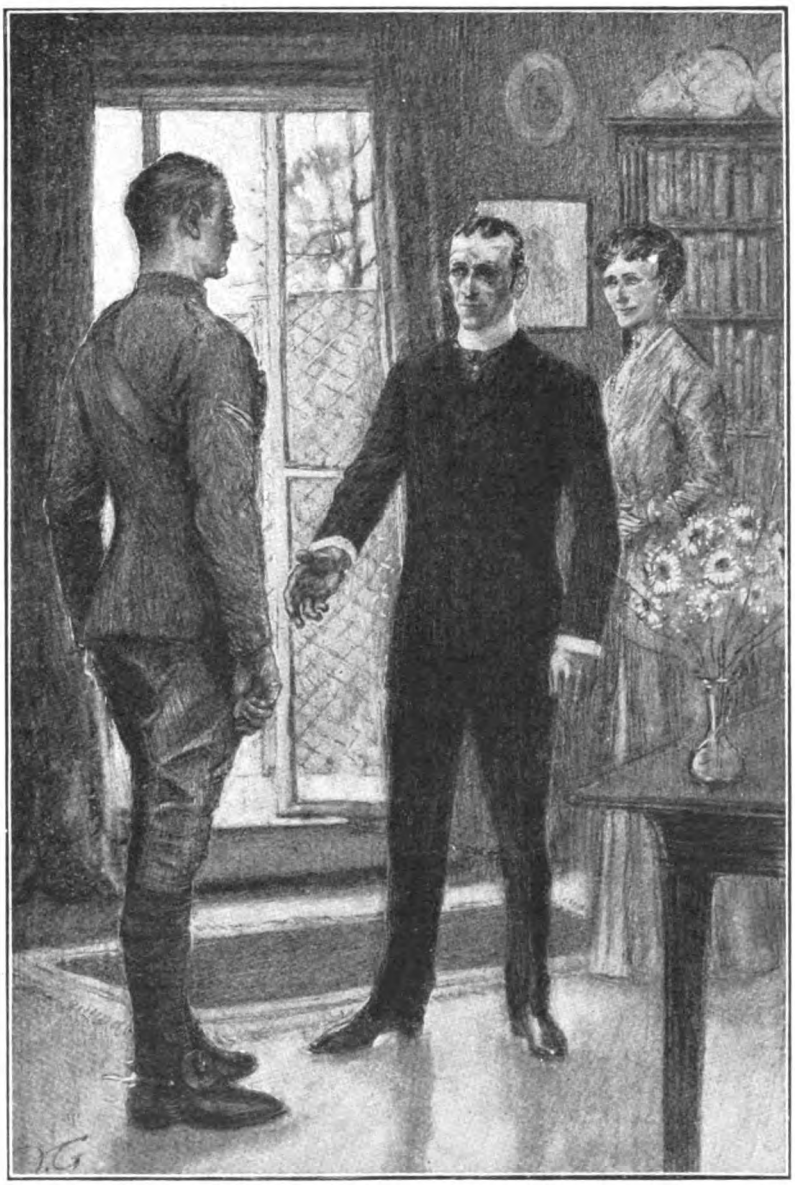
"I—I dare say," said Johnny.

There came another little breathless hush.

Once he had looked longingly to the day when he should greet his son, Champion of the Public Schools, should wring his hand with the full fervent pride that only a father knows, should clap his gnarled fist on the lad's broad shoulder and hold him at arm's length, joyfully, and see in him at last—a gentleman.

Well, once he had been disappointed. That hour had come to-day instead. To Peter an officer was always a gentleman by right.

The words were written down. The whole world knew them. If his son were to be an officer, nobody on earth could doubt that he must certainly be a gentleman, too.



"'I MEANT TO STOP THEM TAKING THAT BELT WHILE YOU WERE AWAY, JOHNNY,' SAID HE, WITH A DEPRECATING LITTLE SMILE."

He put out his hand. Johnny drew back.

"I say, father," he said, awkwardly, "there's one thing I want to say. I'd like you to believe that I—I didn't foul on purpose—that day."

Peter looked at him keenly, then his pent-up feelings suddenly broke in a short, sharp laugh, and he seized Johnny's shoulder and held him, and looked him proudly in the eyes.

For Johnny was a gentleman.

Is it Possible to Communicate with the Dead?

By

SIR OLIVER LODGE.

The great scientist has satisfied himself that the dead can, and do, send messages to the living. How these messages are conveyed, what they are like, and what light they throw on the conditions of the after-life existence, are here made clear, together with many other points of supreme interest and importance.

NO reply can be given on *a priori* considerations, unless it be a contemptuous negative based on too hasty a guess about the significance of the last word in the query. If it be true that "the dead know not anything," they practically have no longer any personal existence, and it cannot be possible to communicate with nonentity. But this is reasoning in a hind-before or pre-posterous manner. The right method of attack is to ascertain first, by experiment and observation, whether communication is possible; and then from that fact, if it becomes an established fact, to infer that after all the dead do know something, and that they have a personal existence.

But then the obvious question arises—How can it be possible to communicate with anyone, however intelligent, who possesses no physical instrument or organ for the conversion of thought into act? How can it be possible to appreciate mere thought?

A partial answer is given by the experimental discovery of telepathy, which appears to be a direct process of transmission from mind to mind. But still, for any kind of reproduction or utilization or conveyance to others, a physical process is necessary; and therefore, so far as we know, a physiological mechanism is necessary. An instrument of some kind there must be; but it does not follow that the instrument employed need necessarily be the property of the communicating intelligence. A musician deprived of his instrument might learn to play on another. Without an instrument of some kind—be it only a pen—his soul might be full of music but it would be silent and unapprehended, it could not be reproduced, it could not even be written: an inferior or a strange instrument would be better than nothing, and might once more confer upon him some power of utterance.

Now the facts of multiple personality show that a single human body can under exceptional circumstances be played upon by several intelligences, not only by one: the normal occupant can as it were be ousted sometimes, and its place taken by others. That is the appearance, and the appearance may turn out to be nearer reality than had been thought likely.

There are certain people whose value for the purpose of enlarging our experience is much greater than has yet been recognized, who self-sacrificingly allow the bodily part of themselves to be employed in conveying messages, which are received telepathically, or they know not how, from intelligences other than their own. Their own personality goes into abeyance or into trance for a time, while their body and brain continue active, and thus messages are transmitted about facts previously unknown to them, and which subsequently leave no accessible deposit in their memory.

A person thus employed as a transmitting mechanism for another intelligence is called a "medium." There are various grades of mediumship, and it is not always associated with complete normal unconsciousness, by any means; but in all cases it appears to be a healthy and useful variety of what in pathological cases is called "multiple personality." The secondary personality in temporary control need not be obtrusive or troublesome, it may be well-controlled and amenable to reason and convenience, but it is not the normal intelligence of the medium, and the stratum of memory tapped is a different one. Facts known to some other person come to the front, facts familiar to the medium recede for a time into the background. The kind of person whose memory can by this means be most readily or commonly tapped is one who has no longer any body of his own, *i.e.*, one who, having been dissociated from his body, having gone through the definite process of dissolution called death, is commonly spoken of as "dead."

It turns out to be possible for a discarnate mind to utilize and so to speak manipulate the organism of another person, either directly or indirectly and under circumstances of considerable difficulty, and thus convey a message to friends still living on the earth.

This is the most frequent and effective method of communication; and many there are who are familiar with such messages by direct experience. The facts selected for mention or transmission in such cases are often trivial domestic occurrences, such as have no public significance, but which are well adapted to prove the identity of the person who remembers them. The triviality of the facts remembered matters nothing, if they have this identifying character. Facts of importance are not nearly so useful; for either they can hardly be verified, or they are of the nature of public knowledge. It is the trivial and the domestic which give the evidential clues and personal traits desired by sorrowing survivors.

Of mediumship there are many grades and varieties. The trance condition above spoken of is one of the most complete forms, but automatic or semi-conscious writing can be obtained by some people without letting more than the hand go out of the customary control. The instrument in that case is the hand supplemented by pen or pencil; the pencil is worked no doubt by the muscles in a normal way, but it is not guided as to the sense of the message by the normal mind of the person working it. Sometimes the pencil is fixed to a larger piece of wood, so that the muscular action can be simpler and less like that employed in ordinary writing—a method called "planchette." Sometimes such a piece of wood is constructed so as to be able to point to printed letters, instead of writing them. And sometimes a still more elementary form of physical instrument is used, and the message comes in the form of bare signals—akin to flag-wagging or key-depressing, or, in the case of those who do not know the Morse code, by repeating the alphabet to the tilts of a table which stops at the intended letter. Table-tilting seems like an old and despised amusement rather than a serious method, it is apparently more adapted to mere games, but with care and sobriety even this forms a possible vehicle for communications of a simple but definite kind. A table is manifestly only a variant, a clumsy and bulky variant, of a planchette, or again of a pencil, which is also a bit of wood actuated by muscles.

Modes of converting thought into physical movement are innumerable, and it matters but little which of them is used. The hand, the larynx, the arm muscles, the throat muscles, are all pieces of matter amenable to mental influence, through the brain and nerve mechanism associated with them. How they can be actuated by mind at all is a puzzle; but the fact that they can be so actuated is undeniable. The element of strangeness about any kind of communica-

tion is not that matter is moved in accordance with a code, so as to reproduce thought in another percipient mind: for that is equally true of ordinary speech and writing; the strangeness of supernormal instances is that the substance of the communication is alien to the person transmitting it, and is characteristic of some other person who is dramatically and vividly represented as really desirous of sending an identifying and comforting message, and who employs such bodily organs and physiological mechanism as he may be permitted for the time to use.

Now let me indicate the kind of messages which may be received.

Some of these relate to facts and experiences "on the other side"—the kind of life lived there, the surroundings, the conditions, the persistence of vivid interest in affairs of earth, and the difficulties and to some extent the *rationale* of communication. But all these belong to what we call "unverifiable" topics—we have no means of bringing them to book or ascertaining what amount of truth the messages contain; so that they seldom get published. Suffice it to say that the invariable assertion is that the conditions on "the other side" are much more like conditions here than the communicators themselves had expected. They speak of flowers and animals, and books, and interest and beauty of all kinds. They assure us that they know very little more than we know, that their character and personality are practically unchanged, that they have not suddenly jumped into something supernal—nor infernal either—that they are themselves just as before, with tastes and aptitudes not dissimilar, but that they are subject to conditions happier and more conducive to progress, and freer from difficulty and gratuitous obstruction than when they were associated with matter.

They also say that things round them are quite solid and substantial, and that it is the old material things which now appear shadowy and evanescent; so that they are barely cognizant of happenings on earth save when definite duties are allotted to them to help those who are coming over, or when they make a spontaneous effort to get through to those they have loved and left behind. They are keenly susceptible to friendly feeling and affection, and they are less shy or chary of expressing their feelings than they were down here.

They do not appear to be in another region of space, but are interlocked and closely associated with this order of existence; the links being ties of interest and affection, rather than mere space-relation or bodily proximity. Moreover, the same constructive ability as must in the long course of evolution have succeeded in producing their old visible organism, by arranging particles of matter, seems able to continue its task under the new conditions, and can construct another body or mode of manifestation out of such substance as is there available—the ether it may be hypothetically supposed to be—a body not unlike in appearance the material one which had been constructed here. And this constructive ability probably belongs not only to human and animal, but to all forms of organic life; so that the surroundings, in what some are beginning to think of as an etherial world, need not be very different from those familiar to us in this realm of matter—that realm which is now so real and all-absorbing to us, which excites our keenest admiration, and yet of the real mode of construction of which we know so little.

However all that may be, the first messages which come through are not of this descriptive character; they represent not attempts to inform, but attempts to convince, to make us realize that lost ones are still vivid and active, and that they are happy so far as we will let them be. They grieve with our sorrow, but otherwise find their new life full of interest and helpfulness and a kind of joy.

The first messages which come through therefore are messages of affection; and next come those little family reminiscences which, to those for whom they are intended, are often very clear and satisfying, although to outsiders they require so much explanation that they lose much of their force. References to pet names, to pet animals, to occurrences on holiday excursions, small accidents or contretemps, all these things seem to jump to the memory when an effort is made to think of some identifying message; and although *names* are rather difficult to get clearly and correctly, through the majority of mediums, and although the importance of names as evidence may easily be over-estimated, still names too are often given, especially names of an intimate and private character.

Another kind of thing especially liable to stimulate and influence early messages is the keen desire apparently felt to relieve the minds of survivors of some anxiety, some suspicion, some misunderstanding, or some trouble, which is casting a shadow over

their lives. To such things departed friends seem peculiarly sensitive, and often make great and energetic efforts to bring comfort to a particular person whom they perceive to be thus afflicted.

How they know, may well seem to be a puzzle; but of course such things are obscurely felt also in this life, and they may come into more prominence and arouse more remorse when easy opportunity of explanation is ended. I should judge that remorse is rather a notable feature of the discarnate mental state, if there is good cause for it; and that the feeling may be akin to that sadly felt by us in the night-watches.

The possibility of telepathy, also, whereby mental impressions of deep-seated character may influence other minds, seems likely to furnish another way in which feelings of this kind may hypothetically be aroused. Whatever the method, perception of sentiments of survivors is undoubtedly a fact; and one great merit of the communications received in such cases is the relief and comfort they have brought to the feelings of those on both sides of the veil.

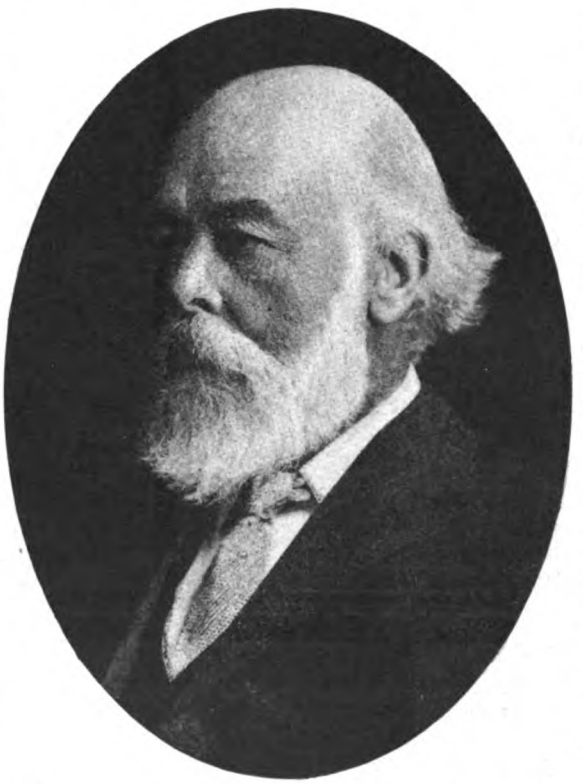


Photo.] SIR OLIVER LODGE. [*Elliott & Fry.*

In this time of widespread distress such messages are very necessary, and they are numerous. In all sorts of ways they come. Youths struck off in full vigour of manhood are not likely to rest contented if they find their loved ones sorrowing unduly for their loss, and spoiling what remains of their lives here. They may be sceptical of their power to get through—they often are; but if by the help of friends, or by any other means, they come to perceive the possibility, they will strain every nerve to awaken in those still here a corresponding desire; so that in some form or other, sooner or later, communion, it may be of a very subjective character, can be accomplished.

In a book on "Life and Death" which Messrs. Methuen are now publishing, I give examples of messages which prove the survival of personal identity, and of memory and affection and character, beyond death. I give examples indeed of family conversations which have been held with the departed; but these must be considered and treated as a whole: it is not useful or fair to pick out bits and quote them out of their setting.

There is no need for such conversations to be too frequent or too persistent. Once those on both sides are made fully aware of undying interest and affection, the few years of separation can be endured; and the main work of life, whether on that side or on this, can be attended to.

The value and importance of the present terrestrial existence is fully recognized by our friends on the other side, and it would be a poor return for the privilege of occasional communication, and an especially ungrateful recognition of the noble and self-sacrificing spirit in which so many at the present time have gone to their death, if lamentation for them, or even an eager desire for communion, were allowed to sap energy or interfere with the full activity of every kind of service such as is possible in the present grade of existence.

Our Ancestors' "Tanks"

AND OTHER ANTICIPATIONS.

By C. VAN NOORDEN.

THE saying that there is nothing new under the sun was never truer than at the present time, when one is so frequently astonished by the similarity of the war engines of to-day to those of the remote past. Looking through the old folios of Valture and of Vegece, published in the later half of the fifteenth century, we find the germ of the more perfect engines of war used to-day.

Take, for instance, the tanks, whose modern use was foreshadowed by Mr H. G. Wells in "The Land Ironclads," as STRAND readers were reminded last month. It is on record that an almost exactly similar turtle-backed tank—driven by steam, however, the oil engine not having been then invented—was patented by Mr. Cowan in 1855, during the Crimean War, but pooh-poohed by the Circumlocution Office, while the accompanying old wood-cut (Fig. 1) shows a "tank" of the year 1473. It will be noticed that the top and sides have been

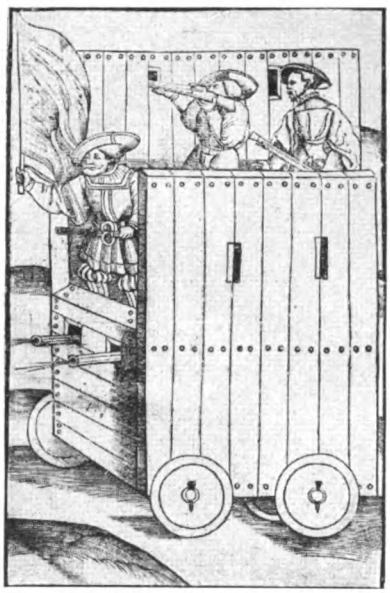


FIG. 1.—A "TANK" OF THE YEAR 1473.

FIG. 2.—A BOMB-THROWER OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

cut away in the drawing in order to show the working, but how it was moved we are not told—possibly, however, by horses walking inside, or by man-power.

The present-day bomb-throwers use, among others, identically the same sling as was used at the sieges of the fifteenth century (Fig. 2), and we are told of the noise resembling a hail-storm, made by the stones falling on the metal helmets of the enemy. Many instances occur of the use of the *saladier*—the modern metal "salad-bowl"—in the old chronicles.

The use of the crow's-foot, or caltrop, dates back to very ancient days. Do we not read how Sir Walter Scott's Antiquary prized these

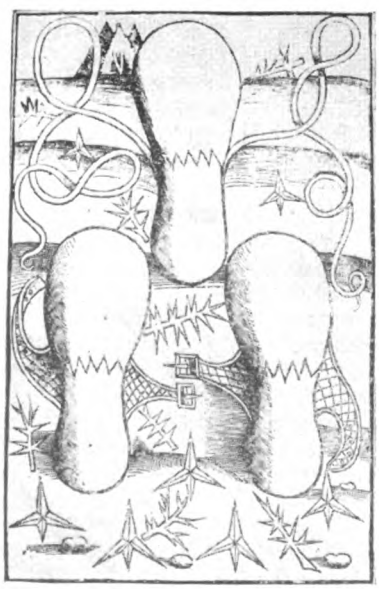


FIG. 3.—THE CROW'S-FOOT AND THE SANDALS WORN AS A PROTECTION.

FIG. 4.—AN EARLY FORM OF THE PNEUMATIC MATTRESS.

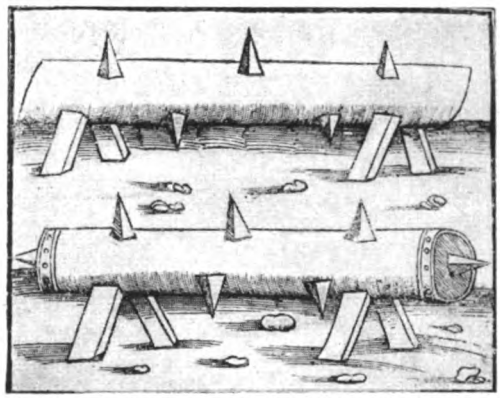


FIG. 5.—A FORERUNNER OF THE BARBED-WIRE ENTANGLEMENTS OF TO-DAY.

ancient relics of the Roman occupation of Britain, used in those early days to lame the horses taking part in a charge, but now sown in front of entrenchments by the Huns to hinder infantry? These evil intentions were frustrated in the past by the metal sandals shown in Fig. 3, and to-day the thicker soles of our infantry afford ample protection.

The soldier's comfort of to-day is increased by the use of a pneumatic mattress, but, as will be seen by the next illustration (Fig. 4), it is no new thing. These early beds may have been used at the siege of Constantinople or of Granada. The artist tries to prove to us how restful is this mattress compared with the solid earth, as is witnessed by the contortions of the unfortunate soldier whose "lodging is on the cold, cold ground."

The use of barbed wire is seen above (Fig. 5) in its early stage, when these portable obstacles bristling with sharpened points were placed in front of an earthwork to hinder the progress of an enemy. Their technical name was *chevaux de frise*.

That the idea of the Maxim gun is nothing new is shown by the terrifying weapon seen in the illustration (Fig. 6), of which some barrels are being fired while others are loading. The gentleman who is apparently holding a stick to his eye is not taking a sight, but is considering the hand-spike by which the table is revolved until the desired cannon is pointed in the right direction.

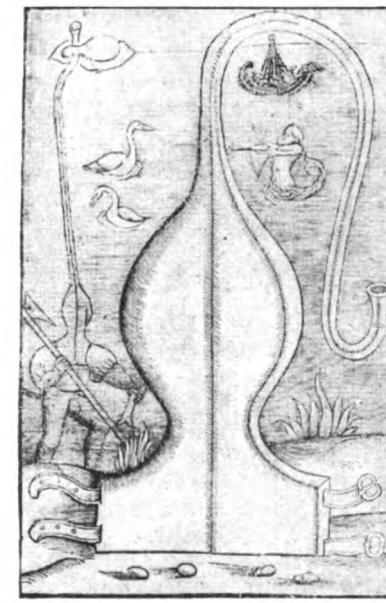


FIG. 8.—AN IDEA THAT SUGGESTS THE SUBMARINE.

The sea-mine, again, is no novelty. Here is a variety which was buoyed up and floated down to the enemy's bridges or water defences, and was fired by a time fuse (Fig. 7).

That submarine attacks were also not undreamed of is shown by our last illustration (Fig. 8). Here a man is seen walking under water, armed with a helmet connected with the air by a flexible tube, the open end of which is supported by a buoy. It must have been rather awkward, to say the least, if the water happened to overflow into the tube. Another little drawback is that, judging from the illustration, there seems to have been no provision for seeing, although doubtless this was a point that had not been overlooked by the inventor

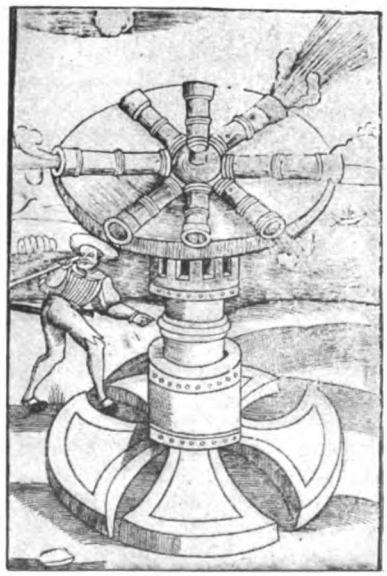


FIG. 6.—AN EARLY FORM OF MAXIM GUN.

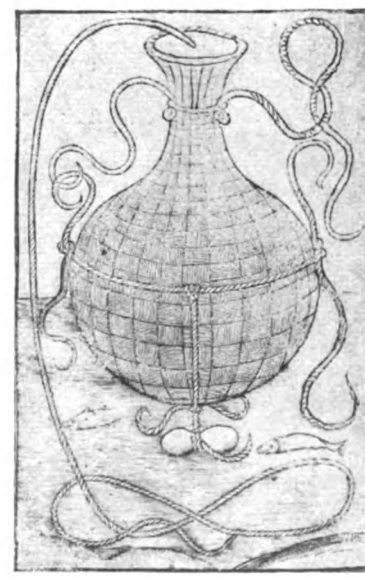


FIG. 7.—A SEA-MINE OF FOUR HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

Celia and the Ghost.

By BARRY PAIN.

Illustrated by Treyer Evans.

THROUGH half-closed eyes that were still heavy with sleep, Celia saw that the dawn had come—the early dawn of a summer morning. The decision to which she had come the night before floated vaguely on the surface of her mind. She could see the letter that she had written and addressed to her mother; she had put it on the mantelpiece under the spotted engraving of some tiresome cathedral. She could hear the footsteps of the bored policeman passing slowly in the street below.

The letter was as follows:—

"DEAREST MOTHER,—I love you, and father, and my brother. That love comes of nature, and nothing could ever alter it. But I am going away. Early in the morning, before anybody else in the house is awake, I shall start. Don't be angry or frightened. I am not going to commit suicide, or do anything disgraceful. I can take care of myself, and I have with me five pounds that I have saved. I shall write to you, too, so that you will know I am well and safe. But I am going, because I must.

"I wonder if you will understand. I don't think a girl of seventeen ought to be sick of life as I am. I am sick of the quarrels and sordid economies of home. I am sick of the drudgery of the office, and the tea-shop luncheons, and everything. I have no liberty. I do not live—I only execute orders.

"So I am going, without any very definite plans, to see if the world has anything better for me. Perhaps it has not, and then no doubt I shall return, when my money is spent, and father will have the pleasure of calling me a fool and an idiot, as he does most days. But I shall have been alive for a little while. Your loving and unhappy CELIA."

No, she did not repent of the decision. Soon she would get up, but there was plenty of time; nobody in the house would be moving for hours yet. Her body was suffused with a pleasant and equable warmth. Her mind tasted already the strong joy of freedom.

And on no account, she told herself firmly, must she go to sleep again.

Bright sunlight, and London all behind her. She must have been walking for hours, and her sensible shoes were white with dust. But she did not feel tired; she was filled with a sense of exhilaration, almost of triumph. Sitting on the stile that led to the field-path she ate hungrily the apples and biscuits that she had bought. Not for years, she thought, had she breakfasted so deliciously. And where she was she neither knew nor cared. At the next village she would make discreet inquiries, and if there were a railway-station and a train that went seaward she would take a ticket. She had been too wise to take a ticket at any London station, lest capture should follow.

She glanced at a diminutive, thoroughly inexpensive, gun-metal watch. In about one hour and a half, she calculated, Mr. Abrahams, portly and white-whiskered, would be demanding the stenographic services of Miss Melrose, and he would be informed that Miss Melrose had not arrived at the office. Whereupon Mr. Abrahams would request that his soul might be blessed and become apoplectic. His sweet son, Mr. Sam Abrahams, aged twenty-two, would also be disappointed. Celia recalled with disgust that Mr. Sam Abrahams distinctly leered, and that he had once put his grimy hand on her shoulder. Ugh!

And at that moment another hand touched her shoulder, ever so lightly. Celia sprang to her feet, thus dropping an apple and the greater part of a biscuit.

"So you've run away, little girl, have you?" said a man's voice. Well, yes, Celia admitted, it was a pleasant voice. And she liked the looks of the young man who stood on the other side of the stile. Not handsome, perhaps, but interesting—which, in Celia's view, was so much better. Yet it was necessary to show that Miss Melrose knew how to take care of herself.

"How dare you speak to me?" she said,

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with breathless firmness. "If you don't go away at once I'll——"

"Useless for two reasons. Firstly, there is no policeman for you to call. Secondly, there is no necessity to call him. Unconventional I may be, but I would not dream of hurting or offending you in any way, little runaway."

He knew that she had run away? He might take steps to send her back again. Clearly this man must be managed.

"Why do you say that?" she asked, shyly. "What makes you think that I have run away?"

"The satchel on your back, the dust on your shoes, but above all the ecstasy in your eyes. May I have this?" He picked up the biscuit.

"But I've bitten it!" exclaimed Celia.

"That's why," said the young man, calmly. "I'll give you the apple, though I am not the serpent nor even Paris."

"Don't understand," said Celia, as she took the proffered apple.

"No? Did you never hear of the prize of beauty?"

"But I'm not," said Celia, blushing.

"After you had gone to bed last night," said the young man, "your father and mother were speaking of you, and they agreed that you were a dangerously pretty girl. Of course, their devotion to you may prejudice them in your favour, but I must say that I agree with them."

"You were not there last night. You can't have been. I don't know you. In fact," she added, a little feebly, "I ought not to be speaking to you."

"No," he said, "you don't know me. But all the same I am a friend of the family. Also—as I should possibly have explained before—I am a ghost."

At this surprising statement Celia was compelled to laugh.

"A ghost?" she said. "You're a very substantial ghost. Do ghosts wear flannel suits and straw hats, and appear at nine in the morning, and eat what's left of my biscuit, and then smoke a Russian cigarette, as you're doing? A ghost, indeed! Whatever do you mean?"

"I am a ghost," he repeated, "just as surely as you are Celia Melrose." She was a little startled to find that he knew her name. "It is as easy for a ghost to be solid and opaque as it is for it to be vaporous and transparent. It is as easy for it to appear at nine in the morning as at midnight. Also there are two kinds of ghosts. The story-tellers speak only of one kind of ghost—the ghost of what has been. That's ignorance. I belong to the other kind. I am the ghost of what will be. Coming events cast their shadows before. It is true that I am solid, but I am also just such a shadow."

"A shadow of what?" said Celia, almost in a whisper. For she loved no man and yet longed to love, and this type of man—if he had not been only a ghost—appealed.

"The shadow," he said, gravely, "of your lover, your husband, the father of your children. You will love me as I shall love you—and what more has the earth for anybody? I will tell you more. In a year's time you and I will be standing here by this stile. The man that I shall then be will have forgotten, and you also will have forgotten——"

"Never!" exclaimed Celia. "It's far too extraordinary. I shall remember this to my dying day." But even as she said it she looked at the man, and commonplace clothes could not prevent her conviction that she was indeed speaking to a being of another world.

"You also will have forgotten," the man repeated, calmly. "Why do you doubt me?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Celia. "You knew that I had run away. You know my name. That was all right. But then you went on to speak of the devotion of my father and mother. Mummy's fond of me, I know, though she's sometimes cross. Matter of fact, when I ran away I made my letter to her just as nice as I possibly could. But my father's temper's awful. You don't know the things he says to me. I simply couldn't stand it any longer. Why, if I'd thought they both cared for me very much I wouldn't have dreamed of running away."

"There is a saying, Celia, that to know everything is to forgive everything. Your father teaches music, I think."

"Yes—it's his profession."

"And the poor man's a real musician. He has not been successful as a composer so far, and he does not know—as I do—that success will come to him before very long. Meanwhile, he teaches the piano to duffers. Think what that means. Every day, on the average, his true and sensitive ear is tortured with seven hundred and eighty-six wrong notes. I include Sundays, when he does not give lessons, or the average would be much higher. And he goes through this continuous martyrdom for the sake of those he loves—your mother, your brothers at school, and you,

Celia. Then he is a poor man. He is bothered always with debts and money troubles. He had to pawn his watch to buy your last birthday present. He just manages to keep on the right side of bankruptcy. The wonder is that he has not been driven into raving lunacy. As it is, his temper and language are frequently deplorable—but his whole life speaks more loudly than his language and contradicts it."

Celia's pretty mouth twitched a little, and there were tears in her eyes, but she controlled herself.

"Oh, dear!" she said. "I didn't know. I wish you hadn't told me about the watch. What a beast I've been! And it's not true that he's always in a temper. Often he says things in his grim sort of way that make us laugh. Ghost, you seem to know everything—tell me what I can do."

The ghost smiled an enigmatic smile. "All that a runaway can do," he said, "is to enjoy the perfect sense of freedom—the escape from drudgery and routine—so long as the money lasts. I think you have five pounds and some small change. Up to that point you can live your own life, develop your individuality, assert your claim to put yourself outside the circle of——"

Celia stamped her foot. "Stop talking that nonsense!" she said, angrily. Perhaps she had just a touch of her father's temper.

And still the ghost smiled enigmatically.

"You must admit," he said, "that it would have been easier to tell you what you might have done if you had not run away."

"What?"

"One thing has already occurred to your mind, I think. You make thirty shillings a week, you know, at the office. But I will tell you of another thing. Bad temper is infectious. When your father is furious your mother is cross and you are sulky. Good temper is infectious, but not so instantaneously. Still in three days an invincibly equable temper will make its effect. One more point—it is just as easy to talk, to be entertaining, to take a little trouble, in the home circle as it is when other people are present. Believe me, Celia, it is vulgar to have 'company manners.'"

"Yes, you may call me vulgar," said Celia, mournfully. "I'm such a lot of worse things as well that it doesn't matter much. But I never meant any harm. Really, I didn't. It was only that I didn't think, or didn't know, or looked at things the wrong way."

"That is quite true," said the ghost, gravely.

"Good-bye, ghost. I'm going home now—at once. They'll be angry with me, and I'll endure it. I suppose I've lost my job in the City, haven't I?"

"I think Mr. Abrahams generally sacks people who absent themselves without good reasons. But in your case the son, Mr. Sam Abrahams, might intercede with success. He is sometimes kind to pretty girls, you know, and he always expects them to—to pay for it."

"Then I will get work elsewhere. And now I must telegraph home so that they won't be anxious. Can you tell me where the nearest telegraph office is?"

"I could, but I can give you better help than that. All ghosts—the ghosts of the future just as much as the ghosts of the past—have strange powers. I will give to you a power that no human being has had yet, though at some point in their lives every man and every woman would give all they possess—and many would even give their lives—to have that power."

Celia looked at him with big eyes, spell-bound.

"What is that power?" she asked.

"Simply," he said, in his ordinary voice—and perhaps he was the more impressive because he was never for a moment histrionic—"simply the power to put back the time of the whole world for a few hours, so that the things which happened in these hours will not have happened at all."

"Yes, I see," said Celia, excitedly. "But it's impossible. How do I do it?"

"Move back the hands of your little watch. I promise you that the time of the whole world shall move backward with them."

"I've been told," said Celia, "that it's bad for a watch to move the hands backwards. But I don't care; I don't care if it breaks. I believe in you. I'm going to do it."

And she did. Perhaps it was really bad for the watch, for it made a knocking sound. It knocked louder. It knocked as the engine of a motor-car knocks just before it sends in its resignation. And then——

And then Celia, with slowly-opening eyes, recognized that it was only a knock at her bedroom door. She heard her mother's plaintive voice.

"Celia, you've already been called once. Why don't you get up? The bathroom's ready for you. And you don't want to be late at the office."

"So sorry, mummy," Celia called, cheerfully. "I'll get up at once and hurry like anything."

There had been times when she had met such appeals with a certain acerbity.

She sprang from her bed and stretched her arms wide, her head thrown backward. What a blessed sense of relief! So she had not really run away. She had not really hurt the people she really loved. She had fallen asleep again after all, and had dreamed the most delightful dream that she had ever known.

The letter she had written to her mother was still on the mantelpiece under the spotted engraving. Celia took it down, and spoke to it as if it had been a living being.

"Do you know what I'm going to do with you, you silly piece of iniquity?" said Celia. "I'm going to put you in prison—in my despatch-case. And in the luncheon hour I'm going to tear you to pieces and throw you over Blackfriars Bridge into the dirty Thames. There!"

She opened her despatch-case. It was rather a good one; it had been a birthday present to her from her father, as Celia remembered. It was at present the guardian of, amongst other things, five one-pound notes, and these Celia took out and placed under a hair-brush on her dressing-table. Then she threw her letter into the despatch-case and shut and locked it.

Then followed a swirl of blue dressing-gown and a dash for the bath-room.

She dressed, her gun-metal watch assured her, in very good time, considering what a lot of hair she had to brush. Just before she went she took the one-pound notes from the table and put them in a very pretty hiding-place.

As she entered the breakfast-room she heard her father's voice.

"I don't believe they'll cut the light off. I shall get Levison's cheque at the end of this week, and then I can pay. However, I'll go and see them about it."

Celia greeted her parents with more cheerful warmth than usual, helped herself to quite a good deal of porridge, and sat down. Her mother looked at her curiously.

"You're looking very pleased at something or other, Celia," said Mrs. Melrose.

"I know," said Celia. "I had a simply lovely dream last night."

"Good," said her father. "Lovely dreams and Mr. Melrose's fees for tuition are about the only two things that have not gone up in price lately."

"And the dream was partly about you,

"'NEVER MIND, CELIA,' HE SAID, 'YOU'RE A GOOD GIRL TO DREAM NICE THINGS ABOUT ME.'"

father. Listen. You're going to have a great success as a composer. It's certain."

"A long time ago," said Mr. Melrose, "I dreamt that I saw a red and blue monkey playing the flute part from the 'William Tell' overture on the E-flat clarionet. It hasn't come true yet, but it may. So may the success."

"It's quite certain," said Celia, "and it's to come before very long. The ghost said so."

"A ghost?" said her mother. "Why, that sounds more like a nightmare."

"But it wasn't. He wasn't a bit like any other ghost."

"And possibly," said Mr. Melrose, "the success won't be like any other success. How goes the time?" His hand went instinctively to an empty watch-pocket and dropped. He glanced at the clock on the mantelpiece. "Twenty minutes, and then I start teaching the 'Moonlight Sonata' to the younger Miss Levison." As he went out he put his hand for a moment on his daughter's head. "Never mind, Celia," he said, "you're a good girl to dream nice things about me."

"Your father seems in much better spirits this morning," said Mrs. Melrose.

Celia assented. She could not remember that he had said anything particularly sunny, but his manner had been more cheerful than usual.

"He had a good night," Mrs. Melrose went on, "and that makes all the difference. It rests the nerves. It's all a question of the nerves. That's how it is that sometimes in the evening, when his nerves have been on the rack all day, he seems—well, almost irritable."

This was a mild but beautiful understatement.

"I know—I understand," said Celia. "And all the pupils will learn that 'Moonlight Sonata,' or at any rate part of it. The last movement exceeds the speed limit, I fancy, though I've forgotten the old thing. By the way, I've got five pounds towards the housekeeping." Her right hand dived into her blouse and produced the notes. "I've got everything I want for myself, and this is left over. It's been gradually accumulating."

"Oh, Celia! This is very good and kind of you. But I don't think your father will ever——"

"He must. If he won't let me pay even a little bit of my own expenses here, I'll go and live somewhere else and break my heart."

"I think, then, I'll just run up and give your father this before he goes out. It might rather—er—alter his plans for the day. But, Celia, why don't you give it to him yourself?"

"Couldn't," said Celia, and looked suddenly mournful. "I couldn't explain, and I might begin to cry."

"But that's silly, child. Why, what on earth could there be to——"

But Celia had already escaped from the room.

At the office later that morning Sam Abrahams, who was not averse to a speculative investment, informed Celia that he intended to take her out to luncheon that day.

Celia did not even take the trouble to make a polite excuse.

"No, thank you," she said, glacially.

"All right," said Sam; "don't get cross. No one's bitten you."

Having thrown the shreds of her runaway letter into the Thames, Celia lunched alone in the Embankment Gardens. And for lunch she had biscuits and apples, but there are no ghosts in the Embankment Gardens.

If you ever meet the famous composer, Mr. Hubert Melrose, do not speak to him of the song with which he first achieved popularity. He may tell you that the song was muck, or he may express himself more strongly, but in any case he will be annoyed with you.

And this is a little ungrateful of him. The song, which was published a fortnight after Celia's dream, had a good melody, dignified and a little ecclesiastical. The words were suitable for singers of either sex, and the accompaniment was within the reach of the vicar's daughter. Its success was instantaneous. In a fortnight the publishers ceased to waste money on advertising it, as the song went by itself; only by the most strenuous efforts could they produce it as fast as they could sell it. And they became most polite and friendly to Mr. Hubert Melrose, and said that they had always been confident of his ultimate success—a fact they had previously forgotten to mention.

And then other compositions by Mr. Melrose, which had been published and had died years before, walked out of their tombs and followed in the song's triumphal procession. These were for the most part more ambitious and important work, and when the critics said that it was a pity that a composer with the genius of Hubert Melrose should waste his time in writing popular ballads, Mr. Melrose smiled with a malicious joy. Prosperity and a tactful daughter had improved his temper.

By Christmas he had given up tuition altogether, and was devoting himself solely to composition. And since he required a secretary who understood business and had a fair knowledge of music as well, Celia worked for him and abandoned Mr. Abrahams. "And a good thing too," said Sam Abrahams. "There never was any spirit of give-and-take about that girl."

One day Celia's father said to her: "It's just come back to my mind that a week or so before I published that putrescent song of mine you barged into breakfast one morning with a prophecy that I was to have a big success. You dreamed it, you said. It would interest me to have an account of that dream. I wish you'd just sit down and type it out."

"I'll try," said Celia, doubtfully. She put a sheet of paper into the machine, and for a few minutes stared at it blankly. Then she got up. "It's no good," she said, "I've forgotten absolutely every single thing about it. And I wish I hadn't."

Later in the evening she tried again, but in vain, to recall her dream. The ghost had told her the truth.

So when, a few evenings afterwards, she met at a dance the young man whose ghost she had seen in that dream she did not recognize him. Nor did he recognize her. They had to be introduced in the usual way. They danced every dance together that they did not sit out together, and he took her down to supper, otherwise neither showed any special mark of preference for the other. Celia went home in a taxi-cab, which seemed to have touches of the seventh heaven about it.

And after that events moved rapidly.

"CELIA LUNCHED ALONE IN THE EMBANKMENT GARDENS."

In the following summer, on a sunny morning, Celia walked in the country on the outskirts of London with the young man whom she was very shortly to marry. She had been engaged to him for countless ages, she said, but it can only have been a few months, since he was the same young man that she met at that dance. When they reached the stile at the footpath across the fields Celia sat down to rest and to eat biscuits from a paper bag.

"I think I'm a greedy pig," said Celia, seriously.

"I'm sure of it," said the young man, with equal gravity.

And then they laughed at their own folly, as very happy people often do, and Celia dropped the greater part of the biscuit which was then in action. In an absent-minded way the young man picked it up and finished it.

Suddenly Celia sprang to her feet. "This has all happened before," she exclaimed. "I feel absolutely sure of it."

The young man smiled enigmatically.

"Quite likely," he said. "Perhaps we met long ago, some time when I wasn't there."

"No, I think you were there and I wasn't. But I wish I had been."

And as she said this she looked so perfectly adorable that it became imperative for the young man to kiss her.

"Oh!" said Celia. "You're terrible; suppose somebody had come past just then."

"Somebody didn't," the young man said, philosophically, and lit a Russian cigarette.

"'I THINK I'M A GREEDY PIG,' SAID CELIA, SERIOUSLY. 'I'M SURE OF IT,' SAID THE YOUNG MAN, WITH EQUAL GRAVITY."

WHO IS THE RICH MAN?

By

ARNOLD BENNETT.

THAT is to say, of course, the effectively rich man. Great financial resources are merely ridiculous unless you have recourse to them. The man who does not sooner or later spend a large part of his income is regarded as either a fool or queer in the head. He is not primarily regarded as a rich man. And, in fact, nearly all rich men recognize the obligation to prove that they are rich by spending money—in other words by exchanging their so-called riches for something else. This state of affairs shows that in truth great financial resources are not generally held to make a rich man—they are only the key to being rich. That man may be said to be rich who has the means to get whatever he wants *and who does get it.*

The nuisance for the man who has acquired great financial resources usually is that he doesn't know what he wants. Possessing the resources and feeling the moral necessity to have recourse to them, he looks about for something to want, and he selects the most costly thing. The acquisition of this most costly thing always involves, in practice, the separation of the rich man from society. Thus he will acquire a large estate, or several large estates, and cut himself off from the world by gates, doors, miles of drive, lodge-keepers, menials, and secretaries. Or he will acquire a two-thousand-ton yacht and cross the Atlantic privately, though less quickly, less comfortably, and even less privately than on a great liner. Or he will keep a private orchestra, instead of being seen at concerts. All which, though magnificent, is anti-social and silly, and is secretly felt to be so by the rich man when he happens to wake up in the middle of the night and can't go to sleep again.

Or, again, he acquires works of art. This surely is good! It is, if he wants works of art. As a rule he doesn't—he just wants to demonstrate that he is a rich man. And even if he genuinely does want works of art, he begins to get uneasy as the collection grows. Once more he feels that he is anti-

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social, that he is keeping for himself what belongs to mankind, and he finishes by giving the whole lot to the public. Or he founds a university, and, having definitely parted with riches to a board of trustees, he ceases, by the amount of the gift, to be a rich man. Or he goes in for propaganda. Now propaganda is of two sorts—honest and dishonest. The first is relatively cheap, the second is expensive. To convince another individual that your view is right means a fair case, sound argument, and wit, none of which can cost very much. But in these days to buy a man's vote costs a lot, both directly and indirectly. Hence the very rich propagandist must either keep the bulk of his money or be dishonest. Or, finally, he seeks power. Well, he will soon discover that the secret of power is not money but personality. And if he has not personality, he may buy power but he will never really use it—somebody else will be using it for him.

In short, the man with great financial resources will always be baulked in the employment of them, the reason being that, in the present structure of society, he cannot genuinely *want* as much as he has the means to buy. Or, if he genuinely does want so much, his conscience and the conscience of mankind will not allow him to keep it in mental peace. The things that people genuinely want are not, in the millionaire sense, dear. Hence the man with great financial resources cannot have full recourse to those resources. There must always be a large ineffective margin. Hence his great financial resources do not effectively make him a rich man.

But there is another and a modester significance of the word "rich." It has been said that the truly rich man is he who earns a pound and spends nineteen shillings. Such a man, however, must be careful lest business ability and thrifty habits lead him to a too large income, for it is certain that if he earns more than a certain number of pounds he will not be able effectively to spend nineteen shillings out of each of those pounds. He must not be ambitious. He must not succeed beyond a certain point. On the contrary, it is essential that he should be a rather mediocre sort of person, with a restricted outlook and small ideas. There are thousands and tens of thousands of such excellent persons in America and Europe and other less fortunate parts of the planet. Their chief boast and satisfaction is that they have "something up their

sleeve," or, to put it differently, an umbrella neatly folded and ready to open for a rainy day. Look at them in the mass and ask yourself whether sincerely you can call them rich in any decent meaning of the term. Do they think rich, do they act rich, do they smile rich? They do not. They are not rich. They have not even the merit of being openly poor. They are neither one thing nor the other. They are the cautious ones, self-denying and secretly envious. Mind, I do not object to thrifty habits. Positively, I practise them. I deem them a proper item in existence. All I say is that thrifty habits alone never did and never will make anybody truly rich, and that, if they become the main interest of life, their influence is apt to be narrowing, desiccating, and impoverishing.

It is plain that we have been inquiring for the rich man up the wrong street. Let us try in a fresh direction. In my adventures through existence I met not long since a man who had a good conscience, a good wife, a moderate fortune, a very fine taste in the arts, and some skill in one art. A fellow, it seemed, entirely after my own mind. But in the process of conversation it appeared that in his opinion the world, including himself, had gone wrong. He saw weakness and vanity in most human creatures, and little else in them. And in himself he saw slow degeneration. He held no hope of improvement. He said he was condemned to futility. And after a while he let slip the dreadful word "neurasthenia." He knew that he was neurasthenic, and he was. I told him that neurasthenia was susceptible to treatment, but he shook his head; he would not admit it; he would never admit it. His profoundest conviction was that with all his exterior advantages he was done for in a declining world. We talked much, and he talked admirably, about the arts, and then he departed, carrying his tragic woe and futility to somebody else.

I sympathized deeply with his wife, whom I knew not. But I sympathized still more deeply with him. I could not help thinking how "poor" he was; and by comparison how "rich" I was in the possession of a rather common quality that he had lost. He believed neither in himself nor in the world. I believed in myself and in the world. I never questioned my belief. It never occurred to me to ask: "What's the use?" My belief had been, so far, unshakable, and promised to remain so. And I saw

suddenly that such belief—in oneself, in the general decency of the world, in the usefulness of one's activities in the world—otherwise a sane, right attitude towards all phenomena and harmonious with all phenomena—I saw that this was the very basis of riches, and that without it nobody could by any chance be called rich. Of course, my acquaintance was mentally sick, and his malady was fully developed. He was exceptional. Nevertheless, we all of us have in us the microbes of his malady or a similar malady, and he who wants to be rich has got to maintain his mental apparatus in such a state that those microbes never have the opportunity to prosper. It is notorious that many so-called rich men, while acquiring their so-called wealth, have left the aforesaid microbes to their own sweet will, with a result that is inevitably the negation of wealth.

An attitude of mind, however, will not in itself constitute riches. To be rich is to possess the world, and nobody can do this without knowledge and experience and sympathy. You may own a great picture, but you will not possess it until you can appreciate it, and you will not appreciate it until you have acquired knowledge and have knocked about among pictures somewhat. As with pictures, so with everything else—be it in the realm of art or in the realm of nature. To own without possessing is to be a mere figure of ridicule. And to look without seeing ought to be a humiliation. None can possess the world at all points, but all can possess it intimately at one point, and all who are really very rich manage to touch existence sympathetically and comprehendingly at many points. Travel is nearly essential to being even fairly rich. The difficulty about travel is, not that it costs much money—it doesn't, but that it necessitates leisure. Therefore a man who has not leisure is not rich, though his income be half a million a year. When I say travel, I do not mean the travel of the young woman who left Rome for Florence because the golf was better at Florence. Nor yet the travel of the man whose one aim is to put to death by cunning and violence. I mean travel with knowledge and sympathy.

In fine, it may be laid down that he who gives all the time to getting money has no time left for getting rich; while he who neglects to get money will probably before he dies discover that money is one of the means to riches and should accordingly be treated with due respect.

The travel of the man whose one aim is to put to death by cunning and violence

The CRIMSON CROSS.

By MRS. C. N. WILLIAMSON.

Illustrated by Balliol Salmon.

I WAS dreadfully tired and warm and dusty that August afternoon, tired of walking London streets and toiling up London stairs, in search of an engagement, and tired of life as well. I had been spoiled and loved and wanted by everybody I knew for nineteen years, and now, for months which seemed longer than years, nobody had cared, nobody had wanted me.

I had been silly enough to suppose that nothing would be easier for a pretty girl whose father had been famous than to pick up a good position on the stage. To be sure, my father, Colonel Trevenor, was dead now, and a political plot had forced him to resign his Consulship in Dalbania. I had no near relatives, and hardly any money; but I had been so flattered in Dalbania, and had had so wonderful an experience in the six months I spent there after leaving my convent boarding-school, that London's neglect astonished me. Of course, more than one engagement had offered, but—on terms I couldn't accept, and all the right sort of managers seemed to have their companies full for next season.

I was going "home" to my lodgings, after an especially disappointing failure, and taking with me a headache which drugged my senses, my brain falling asleep as I walked, when suddenly it waked with an electrical thrill like the call of a telephone bell. The curious contour and bright crimson colour of the Dalbanian Cross had jumped at my eyes.

For half a second I could hardly believe I saw it—there in that London street so drab in its summer dullness. But it was real, and flamed from the shoulder of a nurse's grey cloak. She had just jumped out of a taxi, and having hastily paid the driver she almost ran across the pavement, as if she were frightened at being late for an appointment. So close in front of me did she pass that I had to step back to avoid a collision, yet in her preoccupation the woman did not even turn her head. The long veil of a nurse's bonnet hid her face, and she held it down despite the wind which had let the blazing cross show under its folds. The door where she paused to push an electric bell was that of a Turkish bath, and as she was admitted something stronger than myself made me follow. I went in directly after the woman, but having to stand aside for a pair of laughing girls coming out, she had bought a bath ticket and gone on before I could follow.

"Oh, if I can only have the luck to meet her in the hot room!" I said to myself, as I began hastily to fling off my clothes in the cubicle allotted me. Of course, I knew that the woman would be wrapped in a sheet, but if she were a Dalbanian I could not mistake the great dark eyes and clear, characteristic features of the handsomest race I'd ever seen. I would summon up courage to speak. I would say in her own language, "I'm Colonel Trevenor's daughter Helen. You remember, he was the English Consul."

If she were a Dalbanian woman, she would remember, too, that Prince Paul, the King's younger brother, had fallen in love with Helen Trevenor, that Helen Trevenor had fallen in love with him, and that the "affair" had stirred up political enmity against the Consul. But after all, what if she did know the story? I had done no harm, neither had Prince Paul. He had offered to give up his chance of inheriting the crown (a remote chance, because the King was young and lately married), and I was confident that only the rebellion started by their cousin, called "Ferdinand the Pretender," had kept Paul from following my father and me to England. Now, all was changed, and he and I would never meet again. His country was in confusion. Mirko, the King, had been assassinated by his own officers in the palace guard. Queen Gisela had vanished, and no one knew whether her disappearance meant escape or murder. Ferdinand had usurped the throne, and Prince Paul—the last I heard of him—

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was fighting in the legitimate forces against Ferdinand's rabble army. We had lost sight of one another, and as I could never remind a royal prince of my humble existence, whichever way his tide of fortune turned, the episode was closed.

Nevertheless, there would be no harm in talking about dear Dalbania to a Dalbanian woman, and she, too, might like to speak with one who loved her troubled country as I loved it. I almost prayed to find in the hot room the nurse who had worn that long, slender crimson cross. My heart sank a little when I trailed in, in my ample sheet, to find only two plump little persons who contrasted with, rather than resembled, the tall, grey-cloaked figure.

"She will come soon," I consoled myself. "She must." But the minutes passed, and she did not come. "Idiot!" I said, and could have cried when all hope was over, and nothing remained but to creep back to my cubicle.

Tears blurred my eyes, and so, when I saw a heap of grey things on a chair which should have been draped with my pink poplin, I had to whisk the salt water away before I could be sure of the change. Then I believed that fate had befriended me, and sent me to the wrong dressing-room—*hers!* I glanced quickly at the couch, expecting to see a shrouded figure stretched there. But the narrow sofa had no occupant. Above it, from a hook, dangled my own pink petticoat, and on the floor reposed, just where I had left them, my small white and black shoes, with a white silk stocking folded inside each.

Here was a mystery! Dazed by its queerness, and half believing that I dreamed, I picked up the grey cloak and examined the bright crimson cross on the shoulder. Undoubtedly it was the cross of Dalbania. There was no other, in any flag or national insignia, at all like that slim, exaggerated shape. Now I looked at it closely, I saw that the cross was made of velvet, and sewn rather roughly on to the grey cloth with a kind of "buttonhole" stitch. Underneath the cloak, which had been flung over the chair-back, lay a plain grey dress to match, and on a little table behind the door I saw the nurse's bonnet, with its long, thick veil.

Could the woman I had hoped to meet be a common thief, who had taken a fancy to my pretty frock and hat—relics of prosperous days—and calmly left me her clothes instead? The idea seemed absurd; but in any case the best thing to do was to ring for an attendant, I decided, and get the puzzle solved in one way or another.

In a few minutes I had the whole place buzzing. Nobody could provide a better explanation than kleptomania or insanity. In any case, the owner of the grey costume was gone, and as my clothes had gone with her, I could choose between sallying forth clad as a nurse, or remaining to have the police summoned, in answer to a complaint.

The latter suggestion, from the superintendent of the baths, I refused unhesitatingly, to her relief. Better, I thought, sacrifice a dress and hat, than mix myself up with police-courts. I could almost see the newspaper headings, and shuddered at the thought of them. Besides, there was a certain sense of romance in possessing a cloak with the Dalbanian cross, which made up to me for the loss: and I still felt like one in a dream as I walked out into the street with the emblem of Paul's country on my shoulder.

Scarcely had the door closed (no doubt eyes within were still watching), when a man strode towards me from the opposite side of the way.

"Not so smart as you thought you were, Miss Norman," he chuckled, triumph in a voice as common and unpleasant as his face. "You were followed and seen to go in at the Hamman. Then I knew 'twas all right. So I waited; didn't care to raise a row inside."

"My name isn't Norman," I said.

The man laughed.

"Tell that to the marines. Do you think stitchin' a bit of red velvet on to your cloak is a disguise? Now, I wouldn't make a scene if I was you." And he showed me a police badge inside the breast of his ginger-brown coat.

I thought very hard and very fast for a few seconds. Part of the mystery had cleared itself up. I saw why the nurse had taken a fancy to my things. What the woman named Norman had done I couldn't tell, but evidently stealing other people's clothes wasn't her only offence. Arguing or questioning a plain-clothes man whose face was as sympathetic as a rat-trap would lead only to worse trouble. If I couldn't escape (the hope was slight), the best alternative was to go with him wherever he intended me to go. There, he would not be the only man to deal with. There would surely be someone just enough and reasonable enough to listen to my story. But, oh! how hateful was the alternative. As I walked beside my captor, and listened to his chatter of a taxi round the corner, I gazed wistfully at a beautiful limousine car drawn up at the pavement a few yards ahead. It was all ready to start, the motor gently throbbing,

"I PICKED UP THE GREY CLOAK AND EXAMINED THE BRIGHT CRIMSON CROSS ON THE SHOULDER."

the liveried chauffeur with his hand on the wheel, the footman holding open the door for some lucky child of good fortune.

"Oh, to jump into that heavenly thing and bang the door shut in the face of this brute," I was thinking, when I caught the footman's eye. Unmistakably he made me a sign to get into the car, and as my glance flashed to the chauffeur I saw that he too was willing me to the act.

Had there been time to reflect, perhaps I should have feared to jump out of the frying-pan into the fire. But the idea darted through my head that these men had come to rescue the woman they thought I was, that they had arrived too late, or she had not dared risk reaching them. Something awful might happen to me if I trusted to their protection, but they had honest, even if somewhat stupid, faces, and there wasn't breathing time to decide. With bounding heart and blood I lurched against the plain-clothes man, surprising him so that he staggered, and — the big footman did the rest. Almost before I knew what had happened, I had fallen on to the cushions of the limousine, the door had been slammed, the footman had sprung up beside the chauffeur, and we were off with a leap. I had just time to see a ginger-brown form pick itself up and bounce round the corner, no doubt to take the waiting taxi. Then—we had flashed round another corner. Whether after that the detective who wanted "Miss Norman" got upon our track I could not be sure. At last we sped away from the crowd of motors and vehicles of every sort, and had the road more or less to ourselves. Then I ventured to let down one of the front windows, also to ask the footman why I had been taken into the car, and what was our destination.

The chauffeur stolidly drove on, without turning, but the footman answered with a reassuring air of respect.

"We are obeying our master's orders, madam," he explained, speaking with an odd foreign accent. "We were directed to wait in the street where you found us, till a lady should come along, a lady dressed like a nurse with a Dalbanian cross on one shoulder. We were afraid of being late, for we got

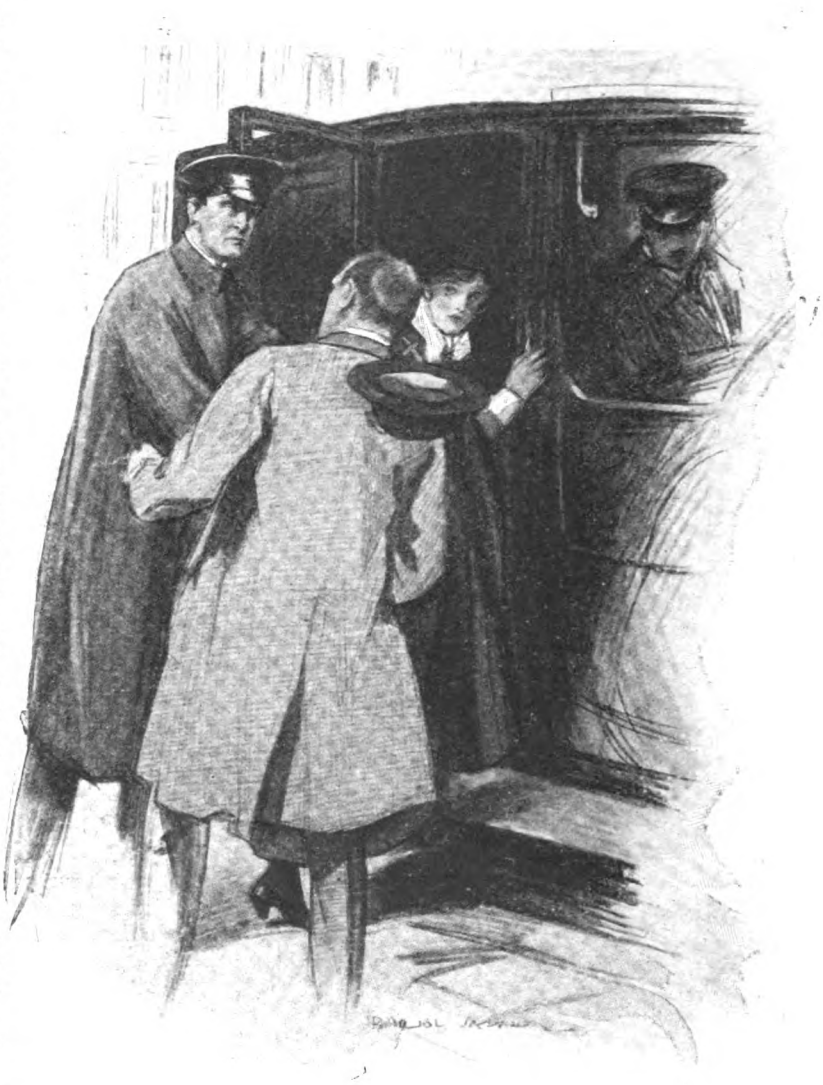
to the place about ten minutes after the time his Excel—the time our master told us. That was because we had a *panne*. It was bad luck, madam. We were uneasy at not seeing you. It must have been nearly an hour we waited. Then we caught sight of you leaving a Turkish bath, and the chauffeur started the car, to be ready in case of trouble. Our master had warned us at the last moment that—there might be a difficulty. In a few minutes now we shall be at the house."

"Who is your master?" I persisted.

"If you don't know, madam, it will be for him to tell you," the servant discreetly replied.

Still I was not silenced.

"And—the mistress?" I suggested. "Is she, too, at the house?"



"I LURCHED AGAINST THE PLAIN-CLOTHES MAN, SURPRISING HIM SO THAT HE STAGGERED, AND—THE BIG FOOTMAN DID THE REST."

"Oh, yes, the lady is there," I was reassured, promptly. "It is for her, no doubt, you are needed, madam."

The man's air of finality relieved me. And there was nothing now to do except to follow the strange adventure of the crimson cross to its end. Luckily, it was still afternoon. It was a long while yet before dark. I felt strong and courageous, and curiously eager, not in the least afraid. Could I be a coward, with *Paul's cross* on my shoulder?

While I asked myself this, the car drove up to an old, tree-shaded, early Victorian house. I did not know the name of the road, but I noticed a half-torn-away placard of "For Sale or To Let Furnished," which gave me an idea that the place had not been lived in long by its present tenants.

The front door was opened by a servant in

the same plain blue-grey livery worn by the men in the car.

" His Excellency is expecting madam," the man announced, in broken English, and then the figure of a tall, slender man was silhouetted against the light.

" At last ! " he exclaimed, and he also had a foreign accent. That of the servants I could not make out ; but even before I entered the room, looking up through the grey veil, I knew that his Excellency was a Dalbanian. I stared wide-eyed through the thick gauze, wondering if I had ever seen him in his own country. I was sure I had not. Yet his features seemed vaguely familiar, and they ought not to have been easily forgotten. Suddenly something in my brain that groped found what it wanted. No, I had never seen this man, but I had seen his picture. Surely, surely I couldn't be mistaken ! He was Count Arno, who had been Prime Minister to King Mirko, and retired owing to differences of opinion—ill-health, the papers said—just before my father sent for me to join him in Dalbania. His photographs had been in many shops in Dalzarto, the capital, where I lived for six months. Count Arno was supposed to cherish resentment against Mirko, but to adore Prince Paul, whose godfather he was.

Through my quick-moving thoughts I heard him say that he had been anxious, fearing an " accident," and he emphasized that word. " Since seeing the morning paper, which comes to us late," he went on, " I feared intensely that—we might lose our eagerly-awaited nurse."

It dawned on me that they *had* lost her, and that I ought to break the news at once. I really meant to do so, but instead I heard myself inquiring, " *What* did you see, sir, in the morning paper ? "

He went to a table, scattered with books and journals (mostly foreign), and picked up a newspaper. On the front page he pointed to a column with a heading so big that there was no need to lift my veil.

" The Nurse Gertrude Norman Wanted on Suspicion in the Brinsley Heiress Poisoning Case."

" Of course, you are innocent ? " remarked his Excellency, with what sounded to my ears like sugared sarcasm. " That goes without saying. But ' wanted ' may be an awkward word, when there is another position to be taken in a hurry. Now, let me make sure without wasting another moment. My secretary Karndorff explained to you your duties, at the agency last night ? "

" Karndorff ? " I stammered.

" Yes. That is the name—by which he was to introduce himself. Unfortunately, I have not seen him since. He is away on business till to-morrow. Did he tell you ? "

" No, he didn't mention that," I answered. I realized that I was involving myself more deeply every moment, and yet, I *had* to know now what was the business for which Gertrude Norman was needed. What if, somehow, it should concern Prince Paul, this fierce old eagle's godson ?

" There was little time to arrange matters," his Excellency sighed. " I see now that you —er—must have had what has happened in mind, when you asked for an appointment in the street. Have no fear ; we shall be able to protect you in your trouble. And it shows me —this thing—that Karndorff has been well recommended to you for the work we have to give. He telegraphed me—we have no telephone here—that he judged from your face and manner, as well as all the circumstances, that you were the person we wanted ; no woman in England more suitable."

(I was thankful that Karndorff wouldn't be back till to-morrow, whether or no his Excellency intended to pay Gertrude Norman a compliment !)

" The nurse we got in for the child's birth left us this morning." Count Arno's words were punctuated with my heart-beats. " We never intended to keep her on. Some excuse would have been made in any case to send her away ; but as it turned out, old Katucha thought her a fool. That settled matters easily for us. Katucha was nurse to the—the lady whose baby was born here yesterday. Katucha is a dangerous woman—of the tigress breed. But she is prepared to think well of you. It is important to win her trust, otherwise she will refuse to let the baby sleep with you to-night."

" It is to sleep with me ? " I echoed.

" Yes, it is to sleep with you, in your room adjoining the mother's. It must sleep soundly. You understand ? "

My lips were cold as I answered, " I think—I understand."

" The child is so young," the old man went on, speaking half to himself, it seemed. " Twenty-four hours of existence ! And he is weak and small. He hardly exists. Ten to one he would cease to breathe before the week is out even if—— But the end *must* come before to-morrow. I will tell you this. It is for the good of a nation that his life should be snuffed out. There can be no suspicion against you, madam. Young delicate babies must often quietly pass away in the night, while their

nurses sleep. Is it not so? A pillow pressed for a few seconds over the mouth and—pouf! the end of what has scarcely begun. You are safe here, because the doctor we have, a naturalized Englishman, is a man from our own country, and loyal at heart to its best interests. I know what he will certify. But a nurse it was necessary to have. You will take another name. I shall introduce you as Miss Brown to Katucha, and so you will be known to—Katucha's mistress. I think anything you may learn in this house as to identities you will find it well, for your own interest and ours, to keep to yourself. And by the way, better perhaps that I see your face."

It was an ice-bound instant. If Karndorff had described Miss Norman, or if the woman's photograph should appear in an evening newspaper, I did not think that Helen Trevenor would ever leave this highly respectable Victorian house, let furnished. Yet hesitation would be fatal. I threw up my veil, and looked the old man in the face. His eyes lit, but not with anger, and his only comment was, "I expected to see a woman of a much older appearance."

"Some people say I seem younger than I am," I admitted. This was true. I was twenty, and had often been taken for eighteen.

"Well, I trust to the character you have already shown," he said. "Show it again—to-night, and earn the other half of *this*."

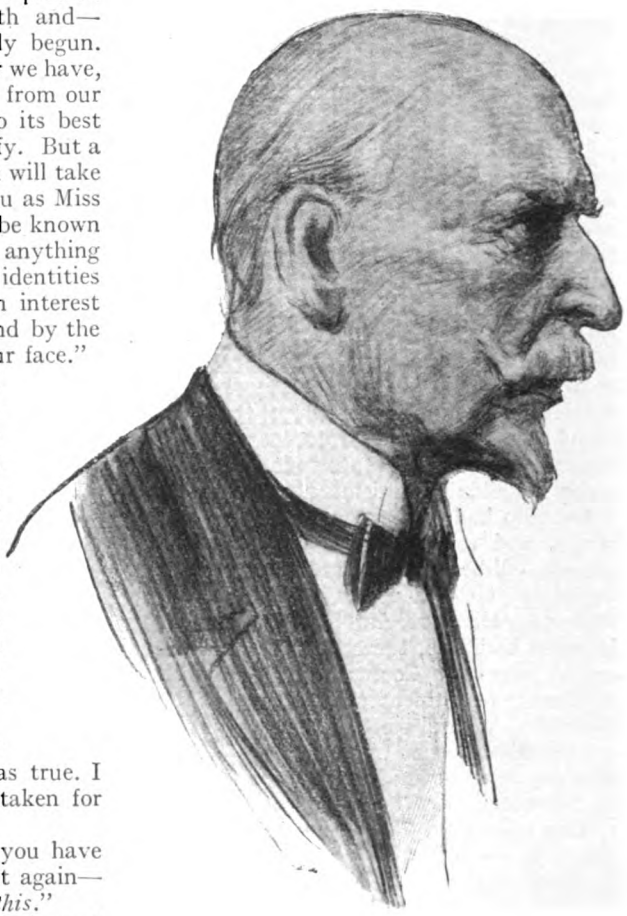
He took from an inner pocket of his coat an envelope, and handed it courteously to me. It was sealed, but with no address. As I took it, not knowing what else to do, he touched an electric button, and brought to the door the servant who had let me in.

"Lead the nurse to Mme. Katucha." The order was rapped out in Dalbanian, and the once familiar language, honey-sweet on some lips, was harsh on these.

At the top of the stairs a brown, wiry old woman awaited me. The eyes that searched my face were fierce, but they were also appealing. They tried to read my soul.

"Can you speak French?" she inquired, in that language. "I have not much English. Ah, it is lucky that you can," when I nodded. "You are young—and your face is good as well as beautiful. How can I be sure it does not hide a bad heart?"

"Trust me, Mme. Katucha," I said, and held out my hand. She took it, and I pressed her hard old fingers. Still clasping mine, she led me into a room, and there, lying in an old four-poster bed, I saw Queen Gisela of Dalbania.



"HIS ONLY COMMENT WAS, 'I EXPECTED

My blood rushed to my heart; yet, when I could tell myself anything, I told myself that I was not surprised. I ought to have known—subconsciously I had known—when Count Arno spoke stammeringly of a "lady" whose boy baby had been born in this old-fashioned house, that he was speaking of his Queen—and of her son, the King. I ought to have known, too, in knowing that, what Miss Norman's business was, and why a woman suspected of murder was precisely the person needed. Count Arno wanted the baby to die because, with him dead and his mother a widow, Prince Paul would have the throne when Ferdinand had been torn down from it.

This was what Gertrude Norman had been

TO SEE A WOMAN OF A MUCH OLDER APPEARANCE."

engaged to do. She, who had never seen Prince Paul of Dalbania, was to have made his way clear to the throne. I, who loved him, must block it.

All I had to do, now I saw the whole situation, was to go back presently to Count Arno, return him his envelope unopened, and say that on second thoughts I had changed my mind. Perhaps, being the man he was, ready to run all risks for ambition, or to take none with a suspected person, I should pay him with my life for not earning his payment. But that was a detail. If I refused to do the work old Arno wanted done, somebody else would do it, and some day before long Prince Paul would be the king.

There was that to think of: and to prevent his reaching the throne would be a selfish act, if it were to be committed in any other way but this; for who could tell after all that he might not find me again, and ask me to marry him, if the crown were on another head than his? But on second thoughts I didn't mean to refuse, and hand the work over to other hands. I meant to save the baby if I could. And after the first rush of realization I hardly thought of Paul. I thought of the piteous Queen-mother, and her one-day-old child.

Queen Gisela didn't recognize me, though only a year ago I had been presented at Court to her and King Mirko, I being one of forty or fifty other *débutantes*. She had seen me at a ball and a palace garden-party afterward; but there was no room in her thoughts now for memories of irrelevant girl-faces. Her whole being was concentrated in anxiety for her son. Count Arno was no doubt playing the friend and protector, and she had to trust him because in the midst of many plots she had no one else to trust. But she was afraid. Perhaps Katucha, more suspicious and sophisticated than she, had made her afraid.

"Shut the door, Katucha," she half whispered. "I want to talk to the new nurse."

I bent over the bed, and she turned down the coverlet to show me a small ivory face in the crook of her arm.

"Who could hurt such a little angel?"

"'NO ONE SHALL HURT HIM,' I SAID."

she appealed to me. "Surely not you? You are young—younger even than I am."

"No one *shall* hurt him," I said, and let my eyes meet hers.

"What do you mean? What do you know?" she faltered. And Katucha drew close.

"Speak out," the old woman urged me. "Don't be afraid that she'll faint. You're at the bedside of a queen, and queens always

have strength to bear what they must bear. The black monster wants the baby king killed."

The Queen's thin little hand pulled me down on the bed. It would have been foolish to keep back what I knew, and I told the whole story.

"We couldn't prove this, even if we tried," said Gisela. "He is too clever. You have nothing in writing?"

"Not a word," I answered.

"It is as well. We don't want to prove things. We want only to save the child. Did he make a time limit? Is it—for to-night?"

I bowed my head.

"Ah, that means my brother-in-law, Prince Paul, must be due to arrive to-morrow. Arno said he was coming—that he'd been wounded, and was out of the fight—that he wanted to see me, for Mirko's sake. But I didn't dare believe that. It seemed too good to be true. Paul would not grudge my baby his life. I believe he'd die to defend it. He doesn't want to be king. He fell in love with a girl, rather like you, an English girl. But Arno would do anything to put him on the throne. And if my little Mirko were dead, Paul would have to reign when they called him home. Dear nurse, I trust you. How can you save my baby?"

"I can't tell yet, but I will do it," I said. "When I see the room where we are to sleep, maybe I shall know better."

I felt suddenly happy and resourceful, and very brave, because Gisela had spoken of the English girl whom Paul loved. I was going out of the house if I could before he came into it, but—the same city would hold us both.

When I realized that the window of my room must be directly above the window of the library where I had had my talk with Count Arno, I knew that my task would be difficult—far more so than the one *he* had set me. And to make it worse, there were squeaky boards in the floor. "I'll wait till towards dawn," I thought, "the dark hour before day. He'll be in his bed and asleep then, surely." But he was not. Looking through my curtains, I could see a light streaming out from his window on to the grass. He was always there. Was he waiting for something? If so, for what? Did he hope to hear a cry in the night, and to have the nurse come running down in a panic to tell him the baby was dead?

I thought that might be the expectation, and so did the Queen and Katucha. But at two o'clock a taxi drove into the gateway and up to the house. Soon after it had gone I heard the rumble of men's voices in the library.

"Who has come?" I wondered. "Can it be Prince Paul, sooner than expected? Will Count Arno risk telling him that the baby is dead?"

"Shall we wait and see what happens?" I whispered to Katucha, who tip-toed to the door ajar between the two rooms.

"No, no," she said. "It would be too dangerous. That may be Karndorff down there—the Count's secretary. If they should come up—oh, go, go quickly, while they are talking, and will not notice even if you make a noise."

There was no hope of getting down from my window, with that light in the occupied room below; but the Queen's room faced the front of the house, and she sat up in bed, trembling, while Katucha and I knotted my sheets and blankets together, and fastened an end of the rope to the heavy, old-fashioned bureau.

Getting out of the window and letting myself down to the ground wasn't much more difficult than descending from one of the tall trees I'd loved to climb in the convent garden. While I stood waiting below, Katucha pulled up the sheets, and tying on the baby's basket, lowered it carefully to me. He had had a drop of some old-fashioned Dalbanian soothing syrup and slept without waking. I did not linger to see what they would do with the sheet. I fled away, fleet-footed, with the baby under Miss Norman's cloak, thankful when I was safely outside the gate. But though I did not see, I knew what they meant to do, that pair of innocent plotters I had left behind. They would draw up the tell-tale rope of sheets and blankets, attach it to some piece of furniture in my room, open my window wide, let down the rope part-way, and then—when I had got a good start, Katucha would wake the household with a wild alarm. She would cry out that the new nurse had stolen the baby, and if it were Prince Paul who had come, she would accuse Arno of a plot to get rid of the little King for his sake. If it were Karndorff, that would not be worth while. But at worst, the baby would be saved, and the Queen had no fear for herself.

We had had little time to plan what I was to do with the child, if I escaped. To shield Gisela and her old nurse from suspicion, I took with me Arno's envelope. (He might think Gertrude Norman meant to blackmail him, if he liked! I hoped he would, and suffer tortures!) But I did not intend to use the blood-money. The Queen had given me her purse, and the plan we had hastily concocted was that I should return to my own lodgings if I could. I gave them the address, not on paper, but to "keep in their heads"; and though I could not communicate with the

Queen or Katucha, sooner or later one or both would reach me.

If I had dared, I should have peeped into the library window, to see whether Paul or Karndorff was there with his Excellency. But I had the baby to think of, and could afford to run no unnecessary risks. So I slipped away along the grass, and out at the gate. In the open road I felt safe—comparatively safe—from Arno, for Katucha would be slow about giving her alarm.

Nothing happened, however, except that I walked what seemed an immense distance, and the tiny bundle I carried became as heavy as the Old Man of the Sea, or the burden on Gertrude Norman's conscience. I buoyed myself up through all with the thought that, when seven o'clock came, and some small eating-places opened, I could find a place to rest and be refreshed. I'd plenty of money, and could get some respectable restaurant keeper to telephone for a taxi. Then, with the child (who would have to be carefully explained to my landlady), I could spin comfortably and safely home.

Suddenly, however, as I cheered my weary frame with this prospect, it occurred to me that I had better look at my money. I had opened neither Arno's envelope nor the Queen's little gold-netted bag. Choosing a street so commonplace that nothing could happen in it by night or day, I set myself to examine the contents of Gisela's purse. It had in it five Dalbanian gold pieces and two notes! I realized instantly that I could not cash them at any such restaurant as I should pass in this district, and even if I could, to do so might put Arno on my track. By this time the search had probably begun, and only by keeping to out-of-the-way streets could I hope not to be caught.

I was compelled to break the envelope containing the first half of Gertrude Norman's reward. No better luck there. I counted five twenty-pound notes. She was to have been better paid than Judas Iscariot. But if I offered a twenty-pound note for a breakfast and asked for change in some small eating-house along my way, as likely as not the proprietor would telephone the police to keep an eye upon me.

Finally, however, reduced to desperation, and expecting at any instant to see the smart blue limousine of yesterday slow up beside me, I begged a lift from a man with a market cart. It was covered, and offered a hiding-place for the grey cloak with its conspicuous red cross which Katucha and I had forgotten to rip off. The carter laughed when I said that I had no money to give him. He didn't want money for such a job, said he. I had to walk again after our roads diverged, but the distance between me and "home" was not too great. I knew my way, and hurried towards the goal, no longer greatly fearing to be trapped by Arno. He did not know my name, or where I lived, and therefore I was now for him a needle in a haystack.

Thinking thus, I forgot that Count Arno of Dalbania was not the only hunter whose desired prey was Gertrude Norman. I took the shortest way to my own lodgings, and before I realized the danger I ran, was in the street of the Turkish bath.

"Got you this time, my lady!" rapped out a voice I knew too well, and a hand gripped the shoulder that bore the crimson cross. I hardly needed to turn my head. I knew without looking that the ginger-clad detective of yesterday had caught me.

"You didn't count on me finding out that you lived in this street before you took your last job! But you don't shake me off as easy as you thought. Halloa, taxi! Hi, police business!"

A taxi, which had been moving slowly through the street, slackened to a crawl, and a young man looked out, as the chauffeur explained that he had a fare. The young man was Prince Paul of Dalbania.

All my soul I put into the appeal for help my eyes gave him, and I prayed that Katucha had told him enough to put him on his guard.

"If it's police business, you can bring your prisoner in, officer," he said, coolly, with a glance at me which was worth being born for. "I'll drive you where you want to go."

"Thank you, sir; you're a real sport, and this is big game," grinned the ginger-clad man.

He pushed me into the taxi, and I didn't resist. Then, before the detective could follow, Paul slammed the door in his face, and gave the chauffeur a direction. Police or no police, Prince Paul of Dalbania was a man who knew how to make himself obeyed.

"You darling! You heroine!" he said. "I've found you. Nothing shall ever part us again." He tried to seize my hands and kiss them.

"Mind the baby!" I cried.

Paul laughed out joyously.

"I will 'mind' him," he echoed. "He's my King, and he gives you to me."

The rest goes without telling. Except that, the revolution now being ended, Count Arno will live in exile, while Queen Gisela is regent for her son Mirko. And Prince Paul and I are going to spend our honeymoon in a trip round the world.

Raven-Hill: Humorist.

IN any representative list of English humorists, the name of Raven-Hill would inevitably be among the foremost; and this not only because he enjoys the peculiar distinction of being one of Mr. Punch's chief cartoonists. Mr. Raven-Hill has been so long associated almost exclusively with *Punch* that one is apt to forget his manifold activities in other directions. But readers who are old enough to remember his work on *Pick-Me-Up*, in the heyday of that sprightly paper, or in *The Butterfly*—true to its ominous name in being as short-lived as it was gay and brilliant—will need no instruction in the artist's versatility.

There is no formula for the making of a humorist. But analysis will always reveal one constant factor—a sense of character.

Now a sense of character is Mr. Raven-Hill's pre-eminent gift. That is proved, if in no other way, by the number of his pictorial jokes which have attained the dignity of classics. For the only jokes that live are those which contain a shrewd commentary on human nature, and the only illustrations of them which stick in the memory are those drawn by an artist with perception.

It has been a temptation to choose all the examples of Mr. Raven-Hill's humour here presented from among these classic jests. But our space is necessarily limited, and some would perhaps be *too* familiar. A chestnut remains a chestnut even if it is also a classic! One outstanding example, therefore, will suffice—the oft-quoted anecdote of the robust A.B. who complains to the ship's doctor that, though he eats, drinks, and sleeps well, yet "when I sees a job of work—there, I'm all of a tremble!"

Of course, the situation which the story conjures up lends itself admirably to illustration. A brother artist, envying the opportunity, might say that the story illustrates itself. All good stories do that, but the result is by no means always happy, for a story must illustrate itself through the medium of an artist with a faculty for seizing fine shades of character, if its uttermost essence is to be extracted. As a distiller of this kind Mr. Raven-Hill has few rivals. His picture of the sleek, well-nourished, and specious sailor is exactly right, and though it is already eighteen years since this drawing was published, it is safe to prophesy that it will be a long while yet before it is forgotten.

FLEET SURGEON: "There doesn't seem much wrong with you, my man. What's the matter?"

A.B.: "Well, sir, it's like this, sir. I eats well, an' I drinks well, an' I sleeps well; but when I sees a job of work—there, I'm all of a tremble!"

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Then there is the delicious incident of the street acrobat whose special "stunt" is the defeating of all

A POSER.

CONSTABLE (to street performer, who is trying to free himself after having been hopelessly tied by Bluejacket): "Now, then, move on there!"

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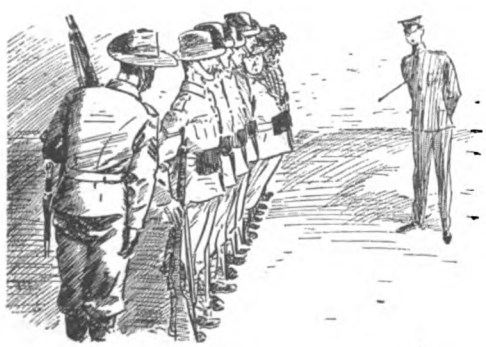
efforts on the part of bystanders to secure his limbs effectually with a rope. Unfortunately for the success of his performance, a passing bluejacket has insisted on trying his hand, and Jack being naturally something of an expert in knots, his handiwork takes more than a bit of undoing. Enter a policeman at the critical moment, with the exquisitely appropriate behest to "move on." Once again the situation is ideal for illustration, but only a true humorist could succeed, by subtle characterization of the *dramatis personæ*, in conveying its pleasant irony with real dramatic restraint. A lesser artist, succumbing to an obvious temptation, would have forced the humour and reduced comedy to farce.

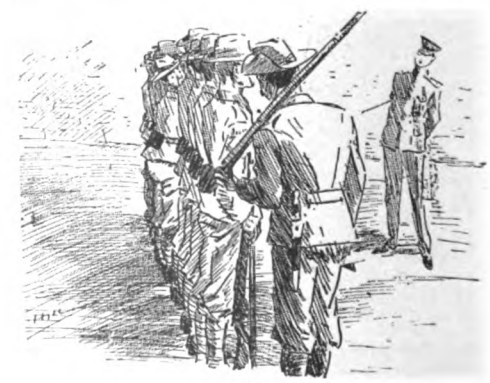
It is notable that so far as Mr. Raven-Hill has specialized at all in any one subject, he has devoted himself to the humours of life in the Services. The reason is, perhaps, that in the days before the Territorial Force came into existence the artist was a keen member of the Volunteers. The humours of voluntary soldiering have been his special province in *Punch* (apart from cartoons) for many years, and many of his own experiences as a Volunteer officer, in camp and on the parade-ground, have been embodied in drawings fondly remembered by the amateur soldiers of what seems now a very distant day.

The pair of sketches entitled "Fore and —Aft!" is an excellent case in point. The humour is apparent to all, but one needs perhaps to have endured the rigours of the barrack square, and to have dabbled in the niceties of ceremonial drill, to relish to the full the tiresome and disturbing corpulence of "Number Five." Similarly it is only those who have themselves experienced the devilish ubiquity of guy-ropes in a camp after "Lights Out" has been sounded, who can derive that secret enjoyment which comes of perfect sympathy and understanding from



FORE AND—

SERGEANT: "Back a little, Number Five!"



—AFT!

SERGEANT: "Up a little, Number Five!"

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SENTRY: "'Alt! 'Oo goes there?" BELATED REVELLER: "Blondin!"

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the picture of the belated "Blondin" steering a devious course for his quarters after a prolonged sitting in the sergeants' mess.

One would probably find, on a census of Mr. Raven-Hill's Service jokes, that he has dealt more often—and perhaps a shade more faithfully—with the Army than with the Navy. Yet many of his best-remembered drawings have sailors for their subjects. This is not altogether surprising, for the bluejacket has a firm hold upon the affections of the public, which his comparative aloofness from the affairs of everyday life only serves to strengthen. The mere sight of Jack ashore draws a smile of welcome, and in all the jokes which are cracked at his expense a note of affectionate regard may be detected.

The bluejacket, in short, is a peculiarly sympathetic figure, and he would always be sure of a friendly audience were he only half the genuine humorist that he is. Mr. Raven-Hill draws him to the life—that surface aspect of him, at least, which is all that the civilian, in the nature of things, can be acquainted with. "'Ome? Wot d'you know about *'ome?*" queries the sailor, in another famous drawing, of a presumptuous and over-friendly nigger; "your 'ome's up that bloomin' palm tree!" One does not know which is the more perfectly true to type—the forceful

NATIVE OF SIERRA LEONE: "'Ullo, Jack! Any news from 'ome?"
A.B.: "'Ome? Wot d'you know about *'ome?* Your 'ome's up that bloomin palm tree!"

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C.O. (to delinquent brought up for having a dirty rifle): "Ah! a very old soldier! I suppose you made yourself out to be years younger than you are when you re-enlisted. Well, what were you charged with the last time you were brought up to the orderly-room?"

DELINQUENT (stung to irony): "'Aving a dirty bow-an'-arrer, sir!"

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figure in the picture, with its eloquent turn of the head, or the pithy idiom of the spoken words printed underneath. The combination is irresistible—a gem of humorous art.

Without doubt Mr. Raven-Hill knows the British bluejacket inside out. There is no question of that. But we fancy that, if it be possible, he knows Thomas Atkins even better.

There are minor points, for instance, about the sketch of a defaulter brought before his C.O. which require a familiarity with orderly-room usage for their full appreciation. There is the air of dispassionate detachment which the N.C.O. so woodenly assumes, and the stilted clasping of his hands about the papers which he carries under his arm—those who have witnessed such a scene will recognize the subtle fidelity to type of the artist's representation. Then there is the ponderous manner of the C.O., so characteristic of certain heavy-weight colonels. Finally there is the delinquent himself — in attitude, in features, and in facial expression the very embodiment of that "old soldier" who is to be found in the ranks of every battalion. These things give a savour to the whole which one may guess a million or two of citizens will now appreciate who formerly would have missed it.

The irony of the ribald question addressed to the energetic signaller shown in another drawing at flag practice is more obviously apparent, but one may conclude again that many readers who have lately found themselves in a similar situation will find experience has put an added edge to their enjoyment.

But though the humours of life in the Services have made so strong an appeal to the artist, Tommy and Jack have by no means absorbed the whole of his attention. This could hardly be, since the field is so wide. All human nature is the province of the

TIME—EARLY SPRING. WEATHER—WINTRY.

RIBALD SPECTATOR (to energetic Territorial busily flag-wagging): "Fannin' yerself, Capting?"

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humorist, and humour is to be found in the drawing-room and slum not less than in barracks or on board His Majesty's ships. Certainly Mr. Raven-Hill cannot be charged with missing chances. Wherever he goes his drawings show that he is quick to seize the humour of the moment. Sometimes it is the ludicrous side of domesticity, as when he shows a baby whose head appears (plausibly enough) to a young and outspoken visitor to be in imminent danger of bursting. Now it is the frenzy of the snapshot fiend, whose succouring of shipwrecked mariners in the upper reaches of the Thames is not entirely disinterested; now the plight of the would-be surf-rider whose plank fails to behave quite "according to the book."

SURF-RIDER: "I'm almost sure this isn't a bit the way it's done in those illustrated papers!"

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EILEEN (remembering the fate of many air-balloons): "When is it going to burst?"

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It should be added that in Mr. Raven-Hill the nation possesses not only a great humorist, but a great and equally representative artist in that difficult medium "black and white." He is in the direct line of succession to Charles Keene, whose robust tradition, both as humorist and draughtsman, he worthily carries on.

"IT'S AN ILL WIND," ETC.

RESCUER: "Hold on a bit! I may never get a chance like this again!"

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THE MAN WHO LOST HIS LIKENESS.

By MORLEY ROBERTS.

AS usual there were two or three officers in khaki in Dr. Henshaw's waiting-room, but Rose Hartopp was too deeply occupied with her own troubles to think much of what brought them there. She saw them clearly enough, and in a dim, dull way was sorry for two who were badly scarred, but much more clearly she saw in her mind varying pictures of her own lover, who was, they said, altered beyond recognition. Though others were waiting, her own turn was next, and she wondered impatiently how long the doctor would keep her beyond the hour of appointment—the last he would ever make for her. For on the mantelpiece stood a note in the physician's own handwriting:—

"After the thirty-first of July Dr. Ewing Henshaw will cease to practise."

She was very slender, very fine, and delicate and nervous in expression—a creature of ultimate refinement, with a mobile, sensuous mouth. But now she looked as if life, and all it meant, was too much for her. What would poor Harry think or do when he heard her decision? And even as she trembled to think of it the door opened and the attendant spoke her name. She came to herself with a start, and saw that one of the soldiers, who was seated at the table, had a maimed left hand that trembled like a leaf. She gave him a shy glance of pity as she left the room and then forgot him. There were so many who were even more unfortunate. To see them made her quiver.

As she entered the consulting-room the old doctor rose. She saw that he was already preparing to go. Some of his bookcases were empty; much of the better furniture removed. Something, too, had gone from Henshaw himself, some of his old fiery energy and self-confidence. But still in his eyes shone the infinite kindness and sympathy which made the meanest patient at his old hospital love him.

"So—so you *are* going?" she sighed. He took her hand and smiled.

"My dear young lady——"

"My dear old friend, oh, I *am* unhappy. I'm a wretch, a wretch!"

He looked at her keenly.

"You've made up your mind, then?"

She nodded, and tears came fast.

She asked about her lover—her lover back from France this three months whom she had not seen yet.

"In himself much better," said Henshaw.

"He's truly, truly so awfully changed?" she asked again, although she knew the truth already. "He's not—not like himself?"

"No," said Henshaw; "I've never hidden that from you."

She wrung her hands.

"And he used to be so splendid, so fine, so—so actually beautiful! And I, who love beauty and shrink so from all that's not lovely. Oh, what a mean thing I am! Tell me, are you sure, sure, I shouldn't know him?"

And Henshaw tapped with his fingers on his desk and seemed to think. Once or twice he looked up at her and then opened his lips. At last he spoke.

"This last fortnight you've been here four times," he said.

"Four unhappy times," she answered, and Henshaw rose and paced the room.

"I do not blame you. I know what you are," he said, at last. "I feel you couldn't bear it."

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She looked up at him fearfully.

"What do you mean?"

"Each time there have been in the waiting-room officers who are my patients——"

She sprang to her feet.

"Oh, I've seen him, then? I've seen him?"

fully. I know he's trying to write to you again."

"Yes, but what a wretch I am!" she said, in a lamentable voice; "what a miserable coward! If only I'd been a poor blind creature who had loved him, who had never known what beauty is!"

'SHE SAW THAT ONE OF THE SOLDIERS, WHO WAS SEATED AT THE TABLE, HAD A MAIMED LEFT HAND THAT TREMBLED LIKE A LEAF."

She clutched the doctor's arm.

"Yes, you've seen him," he answered.

"To-day—to-day?" she cried.

But then Henshaw lied to her.

"No, not to-day; last week."

"And he——"

"He's taking it, and will take it, beauti-

"The blind can know beauty," said Henshaw, swiftly; and she said "Forgive me. I—I forgot. What, what am I to do?"

"You can do nothing," said Henshaw. "You must try and remember him as he was, and some day life will renew itself for you and him."

She cried bitterly.

"He's coming with me to Wiltshire for a long time, I hope, and there among new people who did not know him he may write and paint again."

She took his hand and clung to it.

"You're a good man, the best of men, and I'm—what I am. Oh, will he hate me?"

"You know better. It is what he must have expected," said Henshaw. "He's still young and will recover. Besides——"

He paused and she looked at him.

"Besides?"

"Those who did not know him in the old days won't see what you see. They'll be blind to what you knew."

She rose and shook her head.

"Ah, blind! And some day perhaps another woman will say, when she hears of me, that I was blind. Good-bye."

When she had gone Henshaw said to the servant:—

"I'll see Captain Singleton next."

He heard Singleton's step in the passage and went to meet him at the door. The soldier, who was to be a soldier no longer, was big and strong, but his scarred face, still brown where it was unmarked, worked oddly under the constraint he put upon himself. He took the doctor's hand, and the old man held it firmly.

"You—you see?" he said.

"She didn't know me," said Singleton, with twitching lips; "she didn't know me!"

"I wish you hadn't exposed yourself to such an ordeal, my boy," said Henshaw.

"I—I had to," said Singleton; "but she looked at me as she might have looked at any stranger who had been through things. Any stranger! I'm a man who's lost himself, lost his likeness. My dearest don't know me."

He sat down heavily. His hands still trembled as they had done when the woman he loved had pitied him without any knowledge that she looked upon the man who had kissed her lips before he went to France.

The doctor waited a moment before he spoke again.

"I wonder if you'll be angry with me if I say that I told her she was right."

But Singleton said nothing.

"You know her nature, and I do, too, as I know her health. She's none too strong, and both of you would have been most miserable. And now——"

"And now?" said Singleton.

"I think in time both of you may be happy. Time——"

And Singleton shook his head.

"You'll work again," said Henshaw. "I'm going to take you back to Nature."

"I don't think I shall ever paint any more," said Singleton.

"Then write," said the doctor. "But first of all come with me and sit close to the earth, on a ploughed field if you like, till the smell of fertility helps you. I knew an old colleague who used to say—and get laughed at for saying it—that he would like to take the young men whom he taught and make them sit naked in a ploughed field or by a running stream till they became simple and got the rhythm of moving, singing water into their very nature."

And Singleton sighed again.

"I suppose he must have been a very wise old man," he said. And then he added, with something more like a smile, "Have you many big trees, Henshaw?"

And Henshaw nodded.

"Ah, I remember your passion for them. You're like the Turks, who seem to worship them. Of course, there are trees, and in the park beside my house, in which you'll have full leave to wander or to paint, there's something like an ancient forest. Perhaps you'll meet a dryad there."

The house in which Henshaw lived lay in an old-world village lapped in a warm fold of the Downs. It, too, was very old, and the most ancient portion of it was half timbered. It was overgrown with ivy and ampelopsis, and on the garden or south side, which fronted a park-like expanse of grass and woodland, the gnarled limbs of a great wisteria were now half hidden with climbing yellow roses. The garden was filled with flowering herbaceous plants, and a company of glorious hollyhocks lifted their young spikes of colour higher than the east or western walls. On these and on the stone roofs were great patches of yellow lichen. Near the sunk ditch which separated the garden from the manor park were three big elms and a very old and beautiful silver birch. Over the ditch ran a rustic bridge. A white house showed a wing among the near woods, and on the farther hills grew a solitary clump of trees. And when Singleton looked out of his window on the world which then he hardly dared to hope would renew him, he murmured:—

"'Where dewy twilight poured On haunts of ancient peace.'"

The kindly summer air, the silence and shadows of the evening came to him like balm and a benediction. It was strange

indeed that he should be here in that most eloquent silence after he had passed through the fire which still held many of his loved companions, though some had found in it a greater and more enduring peace than his own.

When the sky at last darkened, and the faint western glow vanished and the stars shone in a pure sky, it appeared possible that even yet life might return to him. If he did not forget he might forgive the bitterness of fate and learn that renunciation held nepenthe in its hands.

He slept well, and in the morning feared much less the sight of strangers. In the old woman who waited on him he found no sign of repulsion. He scrutinized himself in the glass with steady intent, and after a little while lost in a kind of dream his own sense of reality, just as a man may repeat a word till it has no meaning.

Once a week Henshaw went up to town, where he was still doing work at his old hospital, which wanted many of its accustomed workers. When he went the first time he said to his friend :—

" Try to forget the world. Live with the flowers and the trees. Watch them doing their work. When you are tired of the garden go into the park. Very old friends of mine live there, and you and I have the freedom of the place. There's a splendid old oak out there which might have sheltered most kings of England. Find it, sit under it, and consider its great ways."

" They'll see me from the house," said Singleton, nervously.

" The lady who owns it is an invalid and never walks in it," said Henshaw, sighing. And he added, as if quite casually, " If her daughter's at home she won't trouble you either."

" Is there anything wrong with her, too ? " asked Singleton.

And Henshaw nodded gravely, but said no more.

Dearly as he loved his friend, Singleton found his temporary absence almost a relief. He wanted to be alone, for since his return to England he had not known complete solitude. He felt that he would not know himself until he experienced steady long hours with no one to speak to him. He must consult the streams and trees. Perhaps presently he would get upon a hill and see how the land lay with him.

In his desire for present solitude was hidden a terror of it if it were to be prolonged. But after a few days in this new atmosphere he was perfectly conscious of returning strength and capacity. With these wholly renewed, solitude of soul and body would become unendurable.

He was renewing himself faster than he thought. His nights were no longer a recurring drama of hideous inability to meet and avert disaster—dreams in which actual horror, once faced with courage, became a fantastic mixture of reality and sick imagination that froze his blood and woke him sweating ice. These hours returned less often; they moderated their intensity, and he no longer looked forward with apprehension to the hours of sleep. He began to set himself tasks and found it possible to read and keep his attention on his book. But he never went out of the front door. Some day he would go, but first of all he must cross the little bridge into the park, with its shadowy glades and wider spaces. He longed for them, but they appalled him all the same. It was nearly a month before he went down one night to the bridge determined to cross it if he could. Henshaw was again in town.

The night was windless, the sky starry without a speck of cloud. Long ago the crescent moon had sunk from sight; the village was lapped in ancient and consoling silence. He was alone in his world, and once more he hoped to feel his spirit expand till it took in all Nature. As he stood by the gate of the bridge it seemed that a voice spoke in him, as voices had done since his disaster. But now the words he was conscious of might have been uttered by his wise old friend. Or perhaps they came out of the past when he was ambitious. They said to him something that many would think foolish or irrelevant, and others symbolical. They were, " Wait till the clock strikes."

It was a foolish saying perhaps, but he remembered how often he had had to wait till a certain hour for desperate action. He answered himself and said aloud :—

" I'll wait ! "

Within five minutes the hour sounded from the old church tower, and he laid his hand upon the gate at the first stroke. It was easy; it was hard; it was impossible ! And yet as the last stroke fell upon his strained mind he opened the gate with a greater effort than he had ever made in leaving the trenches. And suddenly he almost laughed, for he recalled how leaving them had always set him free and made him strangely, wildly happy after the endless hours of long waiting. He felt, somehow, that he had achieved a bigger thing than he had yet done when, with peculiar exultation, he found the open

space before him and the impossible difficult bridge behind him. So simple a thing was a great adventure, and he knew that he had won a victory.

In this resurrection of the imprisoned spirit he walked slowly towards the shadow of heavy trees and came at last to one he had marked as the noblest oak among them all. About its gnarled and bossy trunk, here and there gapped and hollow, ran a wide seat. He wondered who sat there. Perhaps the child of the White House, whom he visioned to himself as one afflicted he knew not how. There were other calamities than his own, and some, it might be, even harder to bear.

This old oak had outlived many dynasties, and under its broad canopy dead dust in yonder churchyard had dreamed, mourned, or told its tale of long-forgotten love. Of all who had been there he was the last and perhaps not the most unhappy.

As he sat the glade opened before him towards the big house, and when his eyes grew accustomed to the darkness he saw a well-marked path which led straight in its direction. It drew his eyes, and he was presently aware of a light in the house which showed through far-off foliage. The whole woodland was full of spirits, of something like those dryads of whom his old friend had spoken in jest. Perhaps his brain recognized something before it came up in consciousness, but with a start he woke from dreams and came back to the warmer vital earth. On the path he saw a figure coming towards him and entering the shadows, and he caught his breath in a moment's apprehension which crisped his hair as though a cold breeze ran through it. And then he knew that it was a living creature, not anything wrought out of the mind, and he said swiftly, as he slipped from his seat and sheltered himself behind another lesser tree, that this might be the girl whom he had envisaged as a sickly and afflicted child. She must not see him, or in the darkness she would be afraid.

"She walks beautifully and as swiftly as if it were day," he said, and because of her grace and the lightness of her steps his creative mind gave her the beauty which he could not see. And then suddenly she spoke aloud in alarm as she stayed her steps.

"There's someone here!"

Her voice was poignant with an anxiety that Singleton could not fathom, but he spoke rapidly to relieve her rising fear.

"I'm so—so sorry if I've alarmed you!" he exclaimed, and instantly she relaxed her poised rigidity.

"But I—I don't know you," she said.

"I never thought to meet anyone so late," he answered, "but Dr. Henshaw told me——"

And at the doctor's name she turned to him without even the shadow of fear.

"Oh, you're his friend—the—the soldier?"

"Yes, and the night was so beautiful, and this wood——"

"Is it peaceful for you? Are you glad to be in—in my wood?"

With the words she made him free of it.

"Ah, yes, I'm glad!" said Singleton. "And this fine old tree——"

She made a motion of affection towards the shadowy oak.

"Isn't he splendid?" she asked, "and though so old he's so brave and green, and such great company."

"I've found that out," said Singleton.

And she laughed with obvious pleasure.

"I came for something I left here."

"And find a trespasser," he said.

But she denied it. No one who understood a tree could be that.

"Then I may come here again?" he asked.

"Any friend of Dr. Henshaw's may come," she said, softly. "He's my great friend."

"Then you see him often?"

"Oh, very often," she answered, and she made a little smooth gesture in the air which he could not understand, it was so curiously curved.

"He's splendid," said Singleton, warmly.

"Yes, he's little brother to my tree," she cried, "and as kind, and as full of shade and dear old thoughts of wisdom. Come here when you will."

He spoke eagerly.

"And if you see me you won't run away? I'm scarred like the old tree."

"I've not seen you yet," she said, and again she made that little gesture in the air, but more timidly than when she spoke of Henshaw.

There was a serious tone in her voice as she added:—

"And besides, you're a soldier, and have been hurt, and I'd give all my trees to help you."

He was much moved, and when he answered his voice shook.

"You have helped me already. But I wish——"

"What do you wish?"

"That I knew your name."

She laid her hand upon the oak tree.

"SHE LAID HER HAND UPON THE OAK TREE. 'DEAR MR. OAK, THIS IS CAPTAIN HARRY SINGLETON, FROM FRANCE.'"

"Dear Mr. Oak, this is Captain Harry Singleton, from France. Captain Singleton, this is my big brother, and my name is Joan Chester, and the doctor calls me Jenny. I—I hope we shall be friends."

He knew they would be, and when she took her work from the seat under the oak and went away the world seemed a better place to him, and her good-night like the promise of morning.

That night he dreamed of Rose Hartopp, who had forsaken him, and in his dream he spoke to her without passion or reproach. But the strange thing was that he who spoke was not himself after all, but someone who loved another woman whose name the dreamer could not utter or perhaps remember. But Rose asked him if she minded his scars, and he answered, "How should she? She is blind." And with that he woke up in a strange wonder. For as true as the old oak held his court in the forest Joan herself was blind!

And so he fell asleep again, and when he woke at dawn was greatly refreshed. At first

he could not speak of her, but two days later he spoke to Henshaw with much cheerfulness.

"You're a great physician," he said, gravely.

"I know I am," said the doctor, smiling. "And in the pharmacology I use there are mighty drugs."

"Even here," said the soldier, "even here one finds grief, or at least disaster."

"You've not found it," said Henshaw, quietly. "You mean——"

"Joan Chester," replied Harry, softly.

"The happiest, most wonderful creature in the world," said his friend. "She told me she met you in her wood at night, and I was waiting till you spoke. Don't think her unhappy. When did you know this?"

"Only last night. It came to me in a dream," said Harry. "She *is* blind, then?"

Henshaw nodded.

"When you see her she will ask if she may *see* you, and then she will touch your face."

And Harry blenched a little.

"Every scar will be a wonder to her and a proof you are a man," said Henshaw, hastily. "And as for your voice, she remembers it so well that she gave it back to me with all your intonations. She said yesterday that you had a good voice, my dear boy, and that you were beautiful! That's her way of thinking. And she asked——"

He paused, and Harry turned to him.

"Yes?"

"If you would read to her with your wonderful voice. She said you must know Keats and Shelley, because no one could have a good voice who didn't love them."

"I'll read to her," said the soldier. "I've not read aloud since——"

And Henshaw knew that he used to read aloud to someone else who had loved his voice, or so she said.

They walked across the park next day, and Henshaw spoke of Joan's mother, whom Singleton had at last consented to see.

"She's wonderful, too," he said, "but has suffered, and still suffers, and is strong. I've known her since I was a boy. I can't tell you everything, but guess what you like, Harry. All I can say is that she was rich, and I was poor, and by doing what I thought was the right thing I did the irremediably wrong one. A proud conscience is a poor guide, the very poorest."

He turned to Harry and laid his hand on his shoulder.

"Don't make the same mistake one of these days. If in time to come—long years if you like—you fall in love with a king's daughter who loves you, follow your instincts, not some romantic notion of nobility. We manage ourselves too much, to say the least of it."

They were a minute or two alone in the drawing-room, which looked out on a secluded lawn surrounded by old cypresses, before anyone came to them.

"You'll see Joan first," said Henshaw, "and presently I want you to take her for a walk in the garden, or let her find you a copy of Keats, while I speak to Mrs. Chester about business."

And at that moment the door opened and Joan Chester came in.

She was taller than Harry had imagined, but of no less grace than the midnight hour in the woodland had given her in his memory. She moved delightfully and without hesitation, and by the joy in her face it was hard to think she dwelt in darkness or was blind. That she loved the doctor was a certain thing, and when the old man kissed her broad brow she felt for his hand and pressed it, and then turned to where Harry stood with a certainty that startled him.

"Dear doctor, and your friend?" she murmured, shyly, and yet with an eager look that showed no sign of self-consciousness.

"Here's his hand," said Henshaw, "and no weak thing in the way of one either. Tell me what you think of it, Joan."

She grasped the hand held out to her warmly, and Harry felt that for all her slightness she was strong.

"I think it's a good hand," said Joan.

"Take him into the garden, Joan, and show him your flowers," said Henshaw. "We'll meet again at tea-time."

As they went out of the window together Henshaw stood and looked at them and sighed, and then made his way to Mrs. Chester's room. They shook hands in silence, and he sat down opposite her. She was, like Joan, very slim, but much more fragile, and bore the marks of many heavy years upon her face and in her heavy crown of whitest hair.

"Joan's with your friend?" she asked, eagerly. "She seems to like him."

"He's happy with her now because she can't see him," he said, "and she's something rare, and I see curiosity and interest in him, but perhaps he's still thinking of the other woman."

But in the garden even then Joan and the maimed soldier sat together under the shadow of a majestic fir, and Joan was speaking.

"You will stay, then, with the doctor for a long time?" she asked.

"'I CAN SEE YOU NOW,' SHE SAID, 'FOR MY SIGHT IS IN MY HANDS.'"

"I hope so," said Singleton, "as long as he wants me and will have me."

"Then that will be for ever," cried Joan, "for he loves you. I hear that in his voice when he speaks of you."

"Indeed, I hope so," said Singleton.

"But—but may I see you with my hands?" she asked, with sudden timidity.

"You mean——" began Singleton.

"I must touch your face," she said, "if you don't mind, and then I shall build you up, you see."

"I'm very badly scarred," said Singleton, nervously; "you—you mightn't like that."

But Joan was suddenly indignant, and colour came into her cheeks until she looked like a rosy lily.

"A soldier's scars are badges of honour," she cried, "and better than medals. Oh, I shall not mind, but like you all all the better for them."

He took her hand and lifted it to his face and, with his eyes closed, felt her eager, delicate fingers and heard her murmur to herself as she went smoothly over his profile. And when she touched the seams that marred him she did not sigh, but lighted up as though they were indeed a king's gifts to one who had endured much. And when she withdrew her hands she made that strange little gesture to herself as though she stored away among her impressions something to be long remembered.

"I can see you now," she said, "for my sight is in my hands first, and afterwards I—I make more of it, which no one can understand."

And Harry was awed by her look, which was very serious and strangely beautiful.

"You don't, then, know at all what light is?" he asked, in a low voice.

"It is everywhere, like love," she said, softly, "and, when you don't see it, it is like love when you are asleep. I understand it best when I'm with my mother."

"You don't miss it?" he asked, after a little pause.

"Just as I miss not being able to write an ode to a nightingale," she sighed, "I've missed the gift of the art of light."

And it seemed to him who heard her that one who could speak like that might have many gifts.

"You will come and read to me sometimes?" she asked. "That's like the sun to me."

"Whenever you like," said the soldier.

"Because you truly have the right voice," said Joan, eagerly, "and I know you would get the song of poetry, which is almost the best of it. Most only read the words, and at the best try to do elocution like a terrible governess I had who murdered all the poets in the schoolroom, according to rule, and made me cry. She thought it was her pathos, but I was crying for poor Keats and Shelley. And now we must go in to tea. I can tell the time by the sun."

So presently he found himself led by her to her mother's room, and the elder woman looked at him gravely and accepted him, and Harry felt much comforted in his mind by what her eyes expressed. And before he and the doctor went Mrs. Chester said:—

"Remember, Captain Singleton, you are free of all the lands that Joan rules by night or day. And come and see us when you will."

That night she wrote to Henshaw:—

"I do not know what he was, but I think I could learn to believe he is all you say and more. If that happens which you and I have thought of so much it will make me happy. What will it matter if he never quite gets over his sense of unhappy change if she to whom he owes fruitful life is blind to nothing but his outward aspect? She said to me when you had gone, 'I think he is splendid, and has a *beautiful* face.' And she added, presently, 'Scars are just history,' and though I didn't understand her at first, I see now what she means, and how wise she is. You and I know it is true, my friend."

So wisdom and love worked about Harry Singleton, and Henshaw told him he was busy getting well, and thereby working for his country, though he never so much as heard again any disastrous sound of war. The younger man was glad to think this might be true. For the woman he had loved became gradually as much a dream as the battles in enduring, faithful France.

That he had work to do he felt sure, and day by day turned more to literature. Without knowing it he was moved to put aside painting by the thought that Joan could never see what he did, whereas she found an infinite pleasure in the spoken word which was naturally chosen and apt to the living thought. That he could ever be a great writer he knew was unlikely, and yet day by day as his experiences fertilized his earlier aspirations he felt he had something to say, and learnt better how to say it. Joan said so when he read verse to her or told her something he thought of writing, and what Joan said became daily more pleasing to him.

And meanwhile Nature worked. For one evening Harry went to the wood and sat under the oak. It was as perfect a night as that in which he had first met Joan, and though he went out at an earlier hour, there was no more light than there had been then, seeing that the year was older, and the leaves were browning in the mellowing autumn. Presently he heard her footsteps, and yet she stayed a little while upon the path and turned her sightless face to the kindly over-arching sky. When she came to him at last he spoke very quietly:—

"So you've come, Joan!"

And she answered with less boldness than her wont:—

"Yes, dear sir, for the night is beautiful, and the dew in the open brings a sweet scent out of the grass, and your stars are shining."

For sometimes she called the visible aspects of Nature "his," and some of the hidden meanings of things "hers." And suddenly Nature spoke in him and he was astonished.

"My best star has come down out of the sky and lights up our wood, Joan."

"You have kind words for a poor blind girl," she said, as he took her hand.

"Do not mourn for that, Joan. Ah, if I could only give you my sight!"

She sat down and, still keeping her hand, he seated himself beside her.

"You do, good sir," she said, more happily, "but still I mourn and mourn a little. So many things I cannot measure with my hands and feel their curves and in-ness and out-ness and think about their wonderful shapes."

"But if you love them there is light about them," said her lover, who yet knew not that he was her lover.

"It's like the ache in our arms when one

wants to hold those we love," said Joan. "Oh, kind sir, give me one of your stars in my hand."

"I wish I could. But if they're mine they're in my hand, and I give you my hand, Joan," he said, "or I will if you call me Harry."

She trembled a little.

"My friend Harry," she said, softly. "How strange that you did not know me two long months ago, and now we are in my wood and we talk of stars and big moons and odes to nightingales! So often I wanted to find someone who understood stars and poems, but the only men I've ever known, except the doctor, of course—for he says they ought to be more often prescribed—seemed to think stars and poems just words, and then they talked golf, and said they couldn't live here because there wasn't any. But you understand, and give me stars and their dear quaint names, and that's why I call you 'dear sir——'"

"And also 'Harry,'" said the man beside her, with a little choke in his voice. For her nature and her thoughts, her pure ignorance and child-like wisdom, played upon him as though he were some strange instrument. The past of bitter memories was dead. She who had left him was no more.

"Why—why do you tremble?" she asked, innocently, and he knew that if it was true that she loved him she did not know it, nor could she grasp the reach and height of her own emotions. He answered:—

"Some day I will tell you my thoughts, Joan. Don't you know how words will not come?"

"I—I know it," she said. "Didn't you say yesterday that the best thoughts have no words and go out to seek them? Wasn't the dove's olive branch in the old story a word of genius?"

"That's splendid," said her lover. "You'll help me, Joan, and often make me tremble. I'll seek words for my thoughts of you and come to you with them."

"Or without them," said Joan. "They're beautiful, but can be done without."

For she knew the thought might be greater than its visible garment, and that the gods endued none. That night her lover gave to thinking, and the doctor found him very silent, yet knew what worked within him.

But next morning, soon after Harry Singleton, who had found himself and his words, went out across the little bridge, there came a threat to all that his friend and Joan's mother had planned. A delayed letter reached the doctor, and on the envelope he recognized Rose Hartopp's writing. He opened it, and read:—

"I have been thinking all this time, and much has happened. A great disaster to a friend of mine who was in the same position as I. Her lover has killed himself, and she's mad. I'm coming to see Harry to-morrow, for I must. He has made his sacrifice, and I must make mine. Be kind to me, for I'm so unhappy."

Henshaw crushed the letter in his hand, and leaving the house hastily, walked to the village post-office and sent her a telegram.

"Do not come, I beg of you. Wait for my letter, which I am writing now."

But he did not know that, though the letter was written in London, she was then with friends in the same county who lived not more than twenty miles away. He sat down and wrote his letter, and having posted it, went in his car to the station five miles distant, and met the train by which he thought it possible she might come. And while he was absent Rose Hartopp reached his house in her friend's car. At the door she asked for Captain Singleton.

"He's out, miss," said the old housekeeper, who answered the bell.

"Cannot I find him? It's—it's very important," said Rose, in agitation.

"Likely he's in the park, miss," said the old woman.

"And Dr. Henshaw?"

"He's away in his car, miss. Maybe if you came through you could find the Captain, for he's apt to sit under the big oak."

"Show me the way," said Rose. "I'm a very old friend of Dr. Henshaw's and of Captain Singleton's."

A minute later she crossed the little bridge, and seeing the faint indication of a path which led to the biggest group of trees, followed it trembling.

But meantime Joan's lover stood before Joan and spoke.

"I have found the words," he said.

And the blind girl who had waited for him and them lifted her face. On it was a glory, for the sunlight found a way to her through the branches above them.

"What words?"

"You are very beautiful, Joan."

She shook her golden head and coloured sweetly.

"It's lovely to think some say it. Is that the word, dear sir?"

Her lover took her hand.

"To find the words there must be know-

ledge, Joan, and I've been living in a land where there was none, and where all things flowed together as they may in a dream, where nothing was certain but sorrow, and that with the many aspects despair puts on. And yet all the time you taught me——"

She murmured, "What did I teach you—I?"

"What in other's words meant nothing, Joan. That life renews itself and that out of deprivation may spring a nobler growth. Your blindness made me see how splendid you were. I've not always known beauty when I saw it first, but knowing it——"

His voice faltered, and her instincts told her the truth, so that she paled and put her hand to her heart. He knelt before her.

"Do I understand?" she murmured, and then she seemed to look full at him, and in her blind eyes there was something more than sight. She reached out her hands and found his shoulders.

"You've suffered?" she said.

"Oh, I have suffered," he answered.

"Is it past, dear?"

"If—if I am truly dear to you, it is past," he said, shaking. "For—for I love you!"

She bent and kissed his forehead, and he rose and, sitting by her, put his arm about her.

"Yes, I love you, I love you!" she said, almost wildly. "Keep me close to you—close—close! But no, it's all impossible. I never knew love could tear one so."

But the man knew well.

She surrendered her very soul to him.

"Tell me what to do or say. I said light was like love—I, a poor blind creature."

But her lover laughed in sudden joy. Another heard it in the woodland, and came panting.

"You have taught me to see," he said, "and now I'm healed. That's love."

"Oh, it gives and gives, and grows richer," she answered in awe.

"My very scars have dropped from me," he said, softly. "You took beauty by the hand and brought her to me. And last night, when I knew I loved you, I heard something in me sing. Though it was voiceless, it was a melody, and in my dream you gave me words again."

She laid her head upon his shoulder and was silent. But when he looked up from her dear face he saw the woman he had once loved standing shaking by a tree. And he never moved a hair's breadth, or so much as caught his breath, but there was a tremor in his whole frame which made Joan cling to him the more.

There was something in the face of Rose Hartopp which helped him to courage. Beautiful as he had thought her when she was all the world to him, she was still more beautiful now when his heart had left her and found its true home at last. What was it in her which created such beauty though her features worked in peculiar agitation? And like a flash of lightning the answer came to him. She had been unhappy (oh, so unhappy), and had come to him repentant, and now knew there was no need for repentance, and yet grieved that there was no need, being very sure she had lost the greatest gift in life. And yet again she was glad, for even if she had been accepted and had grown to love him as he was, there would have been forever in her very soul the sense of her own weakness and the knowledge that she had failed greatly. But, mingled as her passions were, he knew she rejoiced with him even then. He held up his hand to her as though to ask her continued silence, and then Joan spoke again.

"I know, dear one, all that happened before you knew me."

"I knew you knew," he answered. And still the other woman could not move.

"You—you loved her?"

"I loved her."

The great tears ran down Rose's face.

"And now?"

He paused and, looking up, smiled on her whom he had loved, and in his look she read peace and a blessing and bowed her lonely head and slowly turned away.

"She is still my friend," he answered, "and some day joy may come to her. Life is very strange, and its gifts not to be counted."

Joan knew that as she held to him.

"You forgive her?"

"What have I to forgive now?" he asked, and she who had rejected him turned again and saw that there was a strange beauty in his marred, uplifted face.

"Your voice is so good," said Joan; "tell me the truth, the truth. Have I made your heart sing and your dear scars cease to ache, and brought joy and hope back to you?"

"You have done all this," he said; "what shall I give you in return?"

"You shall give me life," said Joan.

Posers at a Christmas Dinner.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

B°e D

EVERYTHING has its beginning, and the above cryptic arrangement, which was written out by the Vicaress, was the simple problem that really started our little puzzle symposium. It was a quiet Christmas dinner at the Daborns, and the company consisted of Mr. Daborn (known as the Squire), his wife, their married daughter, Marian (Mrs. Whitmore), and her schoolmaster husband (playfully called the Professor), their other children, Bertram and Vera (home from school), and the Reverend Mr. Slocombe and his wife (familiarly known as the Vicar and the Vicaress).

When the discussion aroused by this little problem had subsided, the Squire set the ball rolling by saying:—

"Perhaps Bertram can tell us what part of threepence is one-third of twopence."

It is fair to Bertram to record that it did not take him many minutes to find the correct answer.

"I wonder how many of you can answer this?" the Vicar said.

"Twice eight are ten of us, and ten but three;
Three of us are five. What can we be?
If this be not enough, I'll tell you more;
Twelve of us are six, and nine but four."

"I played a little joke," the Squire related, "on an old gardener of mine. I was away from home, and sent him instructions that on a certain lawn he was to plant four shrubs at equal distances from each other."

"I SENT MY GARDENER INSTRUCTIONS THAT HE WAS TO PLANT FOUR SHRUBS AT EQUAL DISTANCES FROM EACH OTHER."

"Did he succeed?" somebody asked.

"No; when I returned he assured me that the thing was impossible, and it was amusing to see his astonishment when I explained how it was to be done."

"Look here, Bertram," said the Professor, "I'll give you a shilling if you can show us how to describe an oval with one sweep of the compasses."

The boy left the table, obtained the necessary pair of compasses, showed the company how it was to be done, and claimed the reward. The Professor protested that he had evidently a previous acquaintance with the puzzle.

"I admit it," said Bertram; "but after what Mr. Slocombe once said about 'chestnuts,' I felt bound to keep silence."

"Yes," interposed the Vicar; "but if you are

directly challenged, and even offered a reward, as in this case, you are bound to admit previous knowledge."

"I am not so sure," said the Squire. "Whether the knowledge be acquired just before or just after makes little difference. The point was, Could he do it? And he was not asked whether he had any previous acquaintance with the puzzle."

"I bow to the ruling of the Court," said the Professor, handing over the shilling, "and, as Bertram has the compasses in his hand, I repeat the offer if he can now show us how to mark off the four corners of a square, using the compasses only."

This interested the company greatly, and entirely beat the boy. The method is extremely simple, and everybody should know how to do it. You simply use a sheet of paper and the compasses, and there is no trick, such as folding the paper. But the Professor had to show them how to do it.

"I suppose you all know this," said the Vicar. "A man had a circular field, and he wished to divide it into four equal parts by three fences each of the same length. How should he put up the fences?"

"Why did he want the fences to be all of the same length?" asked Vera.

"That is not recorded, my dear," replied the Vicar. "Nor are we told why he wished to divide the field into four equal parts, nor whether the fence was of wood or iron, nor whether the field was pasture or arable. I cannot even tell you the man's name, or the colour of his hair. You will find that these points are not essential to the problem."

"But I like to see an inquiring mind in young people," said the Vicaress. "A nephew of mine asked me the other day what it is that you can put up a chimney down or down a chimney down, but not up a chimney up or down a chimney up. I was only too sorry that I could not give him the information, as I expect he wanted it in one of his studies."

She was requested to repeat the question, and everybody seemed bewildered, except the Professor, who at length explained that the required answer to the difficult problem was—an umbrella.

"A man was once taking a walk——" began the Squire, setting the ball rolling again.

"'I BOW TO THE RULING OF THE COURT,' SAID THE PROFESSOR, HANDING OVER THE SHILLING."

"Where?" asked Vera.

"There you are again," said her father. "It does not matter; I don't know. He was taking a walk when, on turning round, he saw that a friend of his was four hundred yards behind him, and he remembered that he wanted to speak to him. They each walked two hundred yards in a straight line, with their faces towards each other."

"And therefore met," interpolated the Vicar.

"Not at all, sir," the Squire continued. "They were then still four hundred yards apart. It seems absurd, but it is perfectly true."

"Why don't you ask, Vera, if they were both quite sober?" said Bertram to his sister.

"Do I understand you to mean," asked the Vicar, "by a 'direct line' the *same* straight line?"

"Certainly, and facing each other."

"Then it would appear quite certain that they ***must*** have met," insisted the Professor.

"Are you quite satisfied, Mr. Daborn, that your informant was speaking the truth?" asked the Vicaress. "Some people are so addicted, I am sorry to say, in these days, to bearing false witness."

The Squire assured her that the facts were quite correctly stated. It certainly seems extraordinary until you hit on the right explanation.

It had been noticed that Mrs. Whitmore was engaged upon writing something on a sheet of paper. She now produced the following, which she said had been given to her by a lady friend. It represents five old Arab maxims, and the puzzle is to read them correctly.

Never	All	For he who	Every thing	Often	More than
Tell	You may know	Tells	He knows	Tells	He knows
Attempt	You can do	At-tempts	He can do	At-tempts	He can do
Believe	You may hear	Believes	He hears	Believes	He hears
Lay out	You can afford	Lays out	He can afford	Lays out	He can afford
Decide upon	You may see	Decides upon	He sees	Decides upon	He sees

This gave the company as little trouble to decipher as it will probably give the reader.

The Squire asked the Professor to give his opinion on the accepted solution to the following puzzle that appears in many of the old books: "There was a square piece of land containing twenty-five acres, designed for the reception of twenty-four men and their governor, who were each to have a house situated in its own ground, the governor's land being in the centre. How many people's land must the governor pass through before he gets to the outside of the whole?" The solution, he explained, is always given as two. Divide the square into twenty-five square acres and the reason for the answer seems obvious. But the Professor showed that the long-accepted answer is obviously wrong. Can the reader see why?

"I wonder whether any of you know this," said Mrs. Whitmore. "From half of five take one and let five remain."

When the discussion following this poser had died down, Mrs. Whitmore produced a set of anagrams that she had written out. They were as follows:—

1. We all make his praise.
2. Dig over Tom's hill.
3. Will it harm, O hag?
4. John's ready soul.
5. Ha! Meg Jones.

6. Hang joy.
7. Throw sword.

She explained that if the letters in the lines are differently arranged they will spell the names of seven celebrated Englishmen.

"I think," said the Squire, "that a very amusing anagram, if you do not happen to know it, is this. Make one word out of the letters NEW DOOR."

"How many kings have been crowned in England since the Conquest?" shouted Bertram.

"My dear fellow," said the Professor, "we haven't been to school so recently as you. I used to know all the kings and queens and the dates of their coronations by heart, but I doubt if any of us grown-ups could run them off now. Perhaps Vera can tell you."

Vera was writing down the names when her brother rudely snatched the pencil from her.

"Don't waste your time, you duffer,' cried Bertram. "There was only one!"

Then the boy gave the name. Who was it?

Finally Vera was requested by her mother to produce her collection of Alphabetical Riddles. It seems that the girl had made a pastime of putting together all the conundrums she could find for the various letters of the alphabet until she had constructed the following complete list:—

Why is A like noon?
Why is B like a fire?
Why is C like a schoolmistress?
Why is D like a promontory?
Why is E like death?
Why is F like Paris?
Why is G like plum cake?
Why is H good for deafness?
Why is I the happiest?
Why is J like your nose?
Why is K like a pig's tail?
Why is L like giving a sweetheart away?
Why is M a favourite with miners?
Why is N like a pig?
Why is O the only one of the five vowels that you can hear?
Why is P like a man's firstborn?
Why is Q like a guide?
Why is R like Richmond?
Why is S like a furnace in a battery?
Why is T like an island?
Why is U a miserable letter?
Why is V the spoony letter?
Why is W like scandal?
Why does X mean "to join"?
Why is Y like a pupil?
Why is Z like a cage of monkeys?

Of course, they did not on this occasion attempt to solve all these conundrums.

"I wonder whether any of you can read this?" said Mrs. Whitmore. And she wrote on a slip of paper these figures: 102840. "Properly read, it contains advice to a person who has forgotten his luncheon."

This beat them all, and everyone was pleased with the answer.

"I have found it an amusing little pastime," Mrs. Whitmore said, "to take a penny and, looking at the king's head, try to find how many different objects are to be seen there. For example, can you see a well-known animal there?"

Somebody soon shouted, "The hare" (hair), which was correct. Then she asked them to find a place of worship, part of a bottle, part of a hill, a personal pronoun, part of a trunk, part of a whip, a protection against thieves, a river crossing, a badge of royalty, and a receptacle for corn. The reader can perhaps make other questions of the same sort for himself.

"I suppose you have all heard," said the Squire, "of the clever dog who was waiting for his dinner while his master was poring over a big war map? It was a map of Austria-Hungary. His patience becoming exhausted, the dog at last jumped on to the map and placed its paw over the letter 'A' in Hungary. It is said that the hint was promptly taken. And the story reminds me of this puzzle. Take the word 'SPARKLING,' and cover up or take away one letter so as to leave a new word. Then take away another letter from the new word and leave another word. Continue this, letter by letter, getting a new word every time until you finally leave a word of only one letter."

This little puzzle ended the symposium.

The answers will appear next month.

PERPLEXITIES.

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

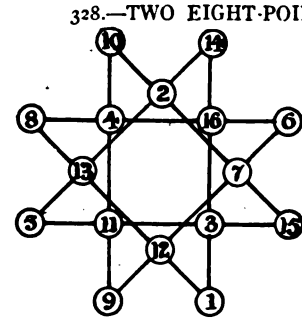
326.—THE RESTAURANT CHECK.

THE amount of one customer's bill must have been 7d. and of the other 3s. 4½d.—the difference between 7d. and the total amount of prices printed on the check, 3s. 11½d. The 7d. can be punched in ten different ways, and no more, as follows: 7; or 6, 1; or 4, 3; or 4, 2½, ½; or 4, 2, 1; or 4, 1½, 1, ½; or 3, 2½, 1½; or 3, 2½, 1, ½; or 3, 2, 1½, ½; or 2½, 2, 1½, 1. In every case the prices left *unpunched* will indicate those to be punched to register the price 3s. 4½d., which simple fact accounts for the second waitress's prompt reply.

327.—THE MISSING CODE WORD.

THE required word is LATERITIOUS, of a brick colour.

328.—TWO EIGHT-POINTED STARS.



THE illustration is the required solution. Every line of four numbers adds up 34. If you now find any solution to one of the stars, you can immediately transfer it to the other by noting the relative positions in the case given.

329.—MATE IN THREE.

1. Q to Q 6 — 1. K to K sq.
2. Q to K 5 — 2. K moves
3. P queens, mate.

If 1. K to Kt 2
2. P queens — 2. K to R 2
3. Q (Q 6) to K Kt 6, mate.

If 1. K to Kt sq.
2. Q to K Kt 6, ch., etc., or
2. P queens, etc.

The BRITISH CAMPAIGN IN FRANCE.

THE FACTS AT LAST!

The Inside Story of the War.

By

A. CONAN DOYLE.

CHAPTER IX.

NEUVE CHAPELLE AND HILL 60.

The Opening of the Spring Campaign—Surprise of Neuve Chapelle—The New Artillery—Gallant Advance and Terrible Losses—The Indians in Neuve Chapelle—A Sterile Victory—The Night Action of St. Eloi—Hill 60—The Monstrous Mine—The Veteran 13th Brigade—A Bloody Battle—London Territorials on the Hill—A Contest of Endurance—The First Signs of Poison.

WE now come to the close of the long period of petty and desultory warfare, which is only relieved from insignificance by the fact that the cumulative result during the winter was a loss to the Army of not less than twenty thousand men. With the breaking of the spring and the drying of the water-soaked meadows of Flanders, an era of larger and more ambitious operations had set in, involving, it is true, little change of position, but far stronger forces on the side of the British. The first hammer-blow of Sir John French was directed, upon March 10th, against that village of Neuve Chapelle which had, as already described, changed hands several times and eventually remained with the Germans during the hard fighting of Smith-Dorrien's Corps in the last week of October. The British trenches had been drawn a few hundred yards to the west of the village, and there had been no change during the last four months. Behind the village was the Aubers Ridge, and behind that again the whole great plain of Lille and Turcoing. This was the spot upon which the British General had determined to try the effects of his new artillery.

THE BRITISH SURPRISE.

His secret was remarkably well kept. Few British and no Germans knew where the blow was to fall. The boasted spy system was completely at fault. The success of Sir John in keeping his secret was largely dependent upon the fact that above the British lines an air space had been cleared into which no German airman could enter save at his own very great peril. No great movement of troops was needed since Haig's army lay opposite to the point to be attacked, and it was to two of his corps that the main assault was assigned. On the other hand, there was a vast concentration of guns,

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which were arranged, over three hundred in number, in such a position that their fire could converge from various directions upon the area of the German defences.

It was planned that Smith-Dorrien, along the whole line held by the Second Army to the north, should demonstrate with sufficient energy to hold the Germans from reinforcing their comrades. To the south of the point of attack, the First Army Corps in the Givenchy neighbourhood had also received instructions to make a strong demonstration. Thus the Germans of Neuve Chapelle were isolated on either side. It was advisable also to hinder their reinforcements coming from the reserves in the northern towns behind the fighting lines. With this object, instructions were given to the British airmen at any personal risk to attack all the railway points along which the trains could come. This was duly done, and the junctions of Menin, Courtrai, Don, and Douai were attacked, Captain Carmichael and other airmen bravely descending within a hundred feet of their mark.

The troops chosen for the assault were Rawlinson's Fourth Army Corps upon the left and the Indian Corps upon the right, upon a front of half a mile, which as the operation developed broadened to three thousand yards. The object was not the mere occupation of the village, but an advance to the farthest point attainable. The Second Division of Cavalry (Gough's) was held in reserve, to be used in case the German line should be penetrated. All during the hours of the night the troops in single file were brought up to the advanced trenches, which in many cases were less than a hundred yards from the enemy. Before daylight they were crammed with men waiting most eagerly for the signal to advance. Short ladders had been distributed, so that the stormers could swarm swiftly out of the deep trenches.

The obstacle in front of the Army was a most serious one. The barbed wire entanglements were on an immense scale, the trenches were bristling with machine-guns, and the village in the rear contained several large outlying houses with walls and orchards, each of which had been converted into a fortress. On the other hand, the defenders had received no warning, and therefore no reinforcement, so that the attackers were far the more numerous. It is said that a German officer's attention was called to the stir in the opposing trenches, and that he was actually at the telephone reporting his misgivings to headquarters when the storm broke loose.

TERRIFIC BOMBARDMENT.

It was at half-past seven that the first gun boomed from the rear of the British position. Within a few minutes three hundred were hard at work, the gunners striving desperately to pour in the greatest possible number of shells in the shortest period of time. It had been supposed that some of the very heavy guns could get in forty rounds in the time, but they actually fired nearly a hundred, and at the end of it the huge garrison gunners were lying panting like spent hounds round their pieces. From the eighteen-pounder of the field-gun to the huge fourteen-hundred-pound projectile from the new monsters in the rear, a shower of every sort and size of missile poured down upon the Germans, many of whom were absolutely bereft of their senses by the sudden and horrible experience. Trenches, machine-guns, and human bodies flew high into the air, while the stakes which supported the barbed wire were uprooted, and the wire itself torn into ribbons and twisted into a thousand fantastic coils with many a gap between. In front of part of the Indian line there was a clean sweep of the impediments. So also to the right of the British line. Only at the left of the line, to the extreme north of the German position, was the fatal wire still quite unbroken and the trenches unapproachable. Meanwhile, so completely was the resistance flattened out by the overpowering weight of fire that the British infantry, with their own shells flowing in a steady stream within a few feet of their heads, were able to line their parapets and stare across at the wonderful smoking and roaring swirl of destruction that faced them. Here and there men sprang upon the parapets waving their rifles and shouting in the hot eagerness of their hearts. "Our bomb-throwers," says one correspondent, "started cake-walking." It was but half an hour that they waited, and yet to many it seemed the longest half-hour of their lives. It was an extraordinary revelation of the absolute accuracy of scientific gunfire that the British batteries should dare to shell the German trenches which were only a hundred yards away from their own, and this at a range of five or six thousand yards.

THE INFANTRY ATTACK.

At five minutes past eight the guns ceased as suddenly as they had begun, the shrill whistles of the officers sounded all along the line, and the ardent infantry poured over the long lip of the trenches. The assault upon the left was undertaken by Pinney's Twenty-third Infantry Brigade of the Eighth Division. The Twenty-fifth Brigade of the same division (Lowry-Cole's) was on the right, and on the right of them again were the Indians. The Twenty-fifth Brigade was headed by the 2nd Lincolns (left) and the 2nd Berkshires (right), who were ordered to clear the trenches, and then to form a supporting line while their comrades of the 1st Irish Rifles (left) and the 2nd Rifle Brigade (right) passed through their ranks and carried the village beyond. Colonel McAndrew, of the Lincolns, was mortally hit at the outset, but watched the assault with constant questions as to its progress until he died. It was nothing but good news that he heard, for the work of the brigade went splendidly from the start. It overwhelmed the trenches in an instant, seizing the bewildered survivors, who crouched, yellow with lyddite and shaken by the horror of their situation, in the corners of the earthworks. As the Berkshires rushed down the German trench they met with no resistance at all, save from two gallant German officers, who fought a machine-gun until both were bayoneted.

"HAVE THEY TAKEN THE TRENCHES?"—THE GALLANT "IT WAS NOTHING BUT GOOD NEWS THAT HE HEARD, FOR

THE ORDEAL OF THE TWENTY-THIRD BRIGADE.

It was very different, however, with the Twenty-third Brigade upon the left. Their experience was a terrible one. As they rushed forward, they came upon a broad sheet of partly-broken wire entanglement between themselves and the trenches which had escaped the artillery fire. The obstacle could not be passed, and yet the furious men would not retire, but tore and raged at the edge of the barrier even as their ancestors raged against the scythe-blades of the breach of Badajoz. The 2nd Scottish Rifles (Cameronians) and the 2nd Middlesex were the first two regiments, and their losses were ghastly. Of the Scottish Rifles, Colonel Bliss was killed, every officer but one was either killed or wounded, and half the men were on the ground. The battalion found some openings, however, especially B Company (Captain Ferrers), upon their right flank, and in spite of their murderous losses made their way into the German trenches, the bombardiers, under Lieutenant Bibby, doing fine work in clearing them, though half their number were killed. The Middlesex men, after charging through a driving sleet of machine-gun bullets, were completely held up by an unbroken obstacle, and after three gallant and costly attacks, when the old "Die-hards" lived up to their historic name, the remains of the regiment were compelled to move to the right and make their way through the gap cleared by the Scottish Rifles. "Rally, boys, and at it again!" they yelled at every repulse. The 2nd Devons and 2nd West Yorkshires were in close support of the first line, but their losses were comparatively small. The bombers of the Devons, under Lieutenant Wright, got round the obstacle and cleared two hundred yards of trench. On account of the impregnable German position upon the left, the right of the brigade was soon three hundred

DEATH OF COLONEL McANDREW (2nd LINCOLNS) BEFORE NEUVE CHAPELLE.
THE WORK OF THE BRIGADE WENT SPLENDIDLY FROM THE START."

yards in advance and suffered severely from the enfilade fire of rifles and machine-guns, the two flanks being connected up by a line of men facing half left, and making the best of the very imperfect cover.

It should be mentioned that the getting forward of the Twenty-third Brigade was partly due to the personal intervention of General Pinney, who, about eight-thirty, hearing of their difficult position, came forward himself across the open and inspected the obstacle. He then called off his men for a breather while he telephoned to the gunners to re-open fire. This cool and practical manœuvre had the effect of partly smashing the wires. At the same time, much depended upon the advance of the Twenty-fifth Brigade. Having, as stated, occupied the position which faced them, they were able to outflank the section of the German line which was still intact. Their left flank having been turned, the defenders fell back or surrendered, and the remains of the Twenty-third Brigade were able to get forward into an alignment with their comrades, the Devons and West Yorkshires, passing through the thinned ranks in front of them. The whole body then advanced for about a thousand yards.

At this period Major Carter Campbell, who had been wounded in the head, and Second Lieutenant Somervail, from the special reserve, were the only officers left with the Scottish Rifles; while the Middlesex were hardly in better case. Of the former regiment only one hundred and fifty men could be collected after the action. The Twenty-fourth Brigade was following closely behind the other two, and the 1st Worcesters, 2nd East Lancashires, 1st Sherwood Foresters, and 2nd Northamptons were each in turn warmly engaged as they made good the ground that had been won. The East Lancashires materially helped to turn the Germans out of the trenches on the left.

GALLANT INDIAN ADVANCE.

Whilst the British brigades had been making this advance upon the left the Indians had dashed forward with equal fire and zeal upon the right. It was their first real chance of attack upon a large scale, and they rose grandly to the occasion. The Garhwali Brigade attacked upon the left of the Indian line, with the Dehra Duns (Jacob) upon their right, and the Bareillys (Southey) in support, all being of the Meerut Division. The Garhwalis, consisting of men from the mountains of Northern India, advanced with reckless courage, the 39th Regiment upon the left, the 2nd Leicesters upon the right, while two regiments of the famous Gurkhas, the 3rd and 8th, together with the 3rd London Territorials, were in support. Part of the front was still covered with wire, and the Garhwalis were held up for a time, but the Leicesters, on their right, smashed a way through all obstacles. Their Indian comrades endured the loss of twenty officers and three hundred and fifty men, but none the less they persevered, finally swerving to the right and finding a gap which brought them through. The Gurkhas, however, had passed them, the agile little men slipping under, over, or through the tangled wire in a wonderful fashion. The 3rd Londons closely followed the Leicesters, and were heavily engaged for some hours in forcing a stronghold on the right flank, held by seventy Germans with machine-guns. They lost two officers, Captain Pulman and Lieutenant Mathieson, and fifty men of A Company, but stuck to their task and eventually, with the help of a gun, overcame the resistance, taking fifty prisoners. The battalion lost two hundred men and did very fine work. Gradually the Territorials were winning their place in the Army. "They can't call us Saturday night soldiers now," said a dying lad of the 3rd Londons; and he spoke for the whole force who have endured criticism for so long.

The moment that the infantry advance upon the trenches had begun, the British guns were turned upon the village itself. Supported by their fire, as already described, the victorious Indians from the south and the Twenty-fifth Brigade from the west rushed into the streets and took possession of the ruins which flanked them, advancing with an ardour which brought them occasionally into the zone of fire from their own guns. By twelve o'clock the whole position, trenches, village, and detached houses, had been carried, while the artillery had lengthened its range and rained shrapnel upon the ground over which reinforcements must advance. The Rifles of the Twenty-fifth Brigade and the 3rd Gurkhas of the Indians were the first troops in Neuve Chapelle.

It is not to be imagined that the powerful guns of the enemy had acquiesced tamely in these rapid developments. On the contrary, they had kept up a fire which was only second to that of the British in volume, but far inferior in effect, since the latter had registered upon such fixed marks as the trenches and the village, while the others had but the ever-changing line of an open order attack. How dense was the fall of the German shells may be reckoned from the fact that the telephone lines by which the observers in the firing line controlled the gunners some miles behind them were continually severed, although they had been laid down in duplicate, and often in triplicate. There were heavy losses among the stormers, but they were cheerfully endured as part of the price of victory. The jovial exultation of the wounded as they were carried or led to the dressing stations was one of the recollections which stood out clearest amid the confused impressions which a modern battle leaves upon the half-stunned mind of the spectator.

At twelve o'clock the position had been carried, and yet it was not possible to renew the advance before three. These few hours were consumed in rearranging the units, which had been greatly mixed up during the advance, in getting back into position the left wing of the Twenty-fifth Brigade, which had been deflected by the necessity of relieving the Twenty-third Brigade, and in bringing up reserves to take the place of regiments which had endured very heavy losses. Meanwhile the enemy seemed to have been completely stunned by the blow which had so suddenly fallen upon him. The fire from his lines had died down, and British brigades on the right, forming up for the renewed advance, were able to do so unmolested in the open, amid the horrible chaos of pits, mounds, wire tangles, splintered woodwork, and shattered bodies which marked where the steel cyclone had passed. The left was still under very heavy fire.

THE RENEWED ADVANCE.

At half-past three the word was given, and again the eager khaki fringe pushed swiftly to the front. On the extreme left of the line of attack Watts's Twenty-first Brigade pushed onwards with fierce impetuosity. This attack was an extension to the left of the original attack. The Twenty-first was the only brigade of the Seventh Division to be employed that day. There is a hamlet to the north-east of Neuve Chapelle called Moulin-du-Piètre, and this was the immediate objective of the attack. Several hundreds of yards were gained before the advance was held up by a severe fire from the houses, and by the discovery of a fresh, undamaged line of German trenches opposite to the right of the Twenty-first Brigade. Here the infantry was held, and did no more than keep their ground until evening. Their comrades of the Eighth Division upon their right had also advanced, the Twenty-fourth Brigade (Carter's) taking the place of the decimated Twenty-third in the front line; but they also came to a standstill under the fire of German machine-guns, which were directed from the bridge crossing the stream of the little Des Layes River in front of them.

The Bois du Biez is an important wood on the south-east of Neuve Chapelle, and the Indians, after their successful assault, directed their renewed advance upon this objective. The Garhwal Brigade, which had helped to carry the village, was now held back, and the Dehra

Dun Brigade of 1st and 4th Seaforths, Jats, and Gurkhas, supported by the Jullundur Brigade from the Lahore Division, moved forward to carry the wood. They gained a considerable stretch of ground by a magnificent charge over the open, but were held up along the line of the river as their European comrades had been to the north. More than once the gallant Indians cleared the wood, but could not permanently hold it. The German post at the bridge was able to enfilade the line, and our artillery was unable to drive it out. Three regiments of the First Brigade were brought up to Richebourg in support of the attack, but darkness came on before the preparations were complete. The troops slept upon the ground which they had won, ready and eager for the renewal of the battle in the morning. The losses had been heavy during the day, falling with undue severity upon a few particular battalions; but the soldiers were of good heart, for continual strings of German prisoners, numbering nine hundred in all, had been led through their lines, and they had but to look around them to assure themselves of the loss which they had inflicted upon the enemy. In that long winter struggle a few yards to west or east had been a matter for which a man might gladly lay down his life, so that now, when more than a thousand yards had been gained by a single forward spring, there was no desire to flinch from the grievous cost.

SUBSIDIARY ATTACKS.

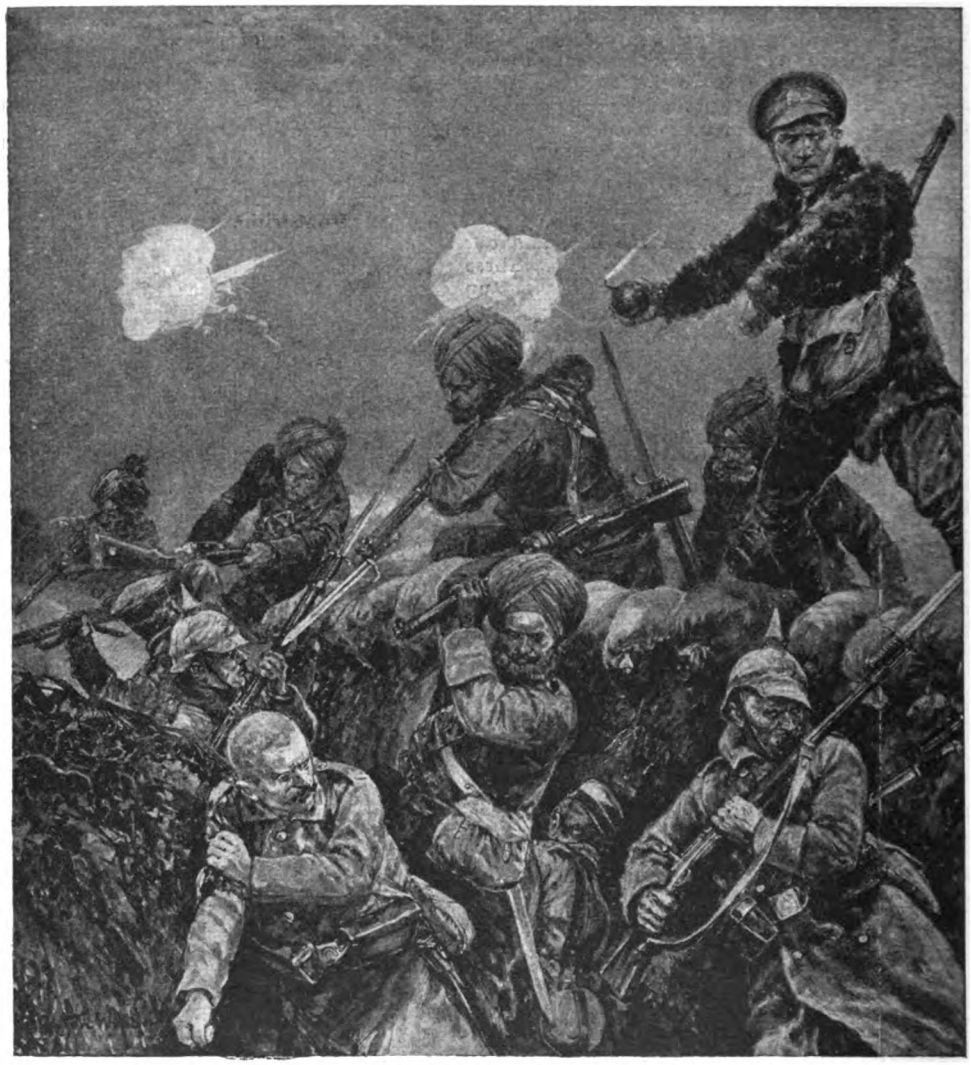
It has already been stated that the British had made demonstrations to right and to left in order to hold the enemy in their trenches. In the case of Smith-Dorrien's Second Army, a bombardment along the line was sufficient for the purpose. To the south, however, at Givenchy, the First Corps made an attack upon the trenches two hundred yards in front of them, which had no success, as the wire had been uncut. This attack was carried out by Fanshawe's Sixth Infantry Brigade, and if it failed the failure was not due to want of intrepid leading by the officers and desperate courage of the men. The 1st King's (Liverpool) suffered very heavily in front of the impassable wire. "Our boys took their bayonets and hacked away. It was impossible to break through." Colonel Carter was wounded, but continued to lead his men. Feveran and Suatt, who led the assault, were respectively killed and wounded. The officers were nearly all hit, down to the young Subaltern Webb, who kept shouting "Come on, the King's!" until he could shout no more. A hundred were killed and one hundred and nineteen wounded in the ranks. Both the 2nd South Staffords and the 1st King's Royal Rifles joined in this brave, but ineffectual, attack, and lost very heavily. The total loss of the brigade was between six and seven hundred, but at least it had prevented this section of the line from reinforcing Neuve Chapelle. All along the line the night was spent in making good the ground that had been won.

SECOND DAY OF BATTLE.

The morning of the 11th broke with thick mist, a condition which continued during the whole of the day. Both the use of the aircraft and the direction of the artillery were negatived by the state of the weather—a grievous piece of ill-fortune, as it put a stop to any serious advance during the day, since it would have been a desperate business to march infantry against a difficult front without any artillery preparation. In this way the Germans gained a precious respite during which they might reinforce their line and prepare for a further attack. They essayed a counter-attack from the Bois du Biez in the morning, but it was easily repulsed by the Indians. Their shell-fire, however, was very murderous. The British infantry still faced Moulin-du-Piètre in the north and the Bois du Biez in the south, but could make no progress without support, while they lost heavily from the German artillery. The Indians were still at the south of the line, the Twenty-fourth Brigade in the middle and the Twenty-first in the north. Farther north still, at a point just south of Armentières, a useful little advance was made, for late at night, or early in the morning of the 12th, the Seventeenth Infantry Brigade (Harper's) had made a swift dash at the village of l'Epinette, calculating, no doubt, that some of its defenders had been drafted south to strengthen the stricken line. The place was carried by storm at the small cost of five officers and thirty men, and the line carried forward at this point to a depth of three hundred yards over a front of half a mile. A counter-attack upon the 13th was driven off with loss.

THIRD DAY.

So far as the main operation was concerned, the weather upon the 12th was hardly more favourable than upon the 11th. The veil of mist still intervened between the heavy artillery and its target. Three aeroplanes were lost in the determined efforts of the airmen to get close observation of the position. It also interfered with the accuracy of the German fire, which was poured upon the area held by the British troops, but inflicted small damage upon them. The day began by an attack in which the Germans got possession of a trench held by the 1st Sherwood Foresters. As the mist rose the flank company of the 2nd West Yorks perceived these unwelcome neighbours and, under the lead of Captain Harrington, turned them out again. Both the Indians on the right and the Seventh Division on the left lost a number of men during the morning in endeavouring, with poor success, to drive the German garrisons out of the various farmhouses, which were impregnable to anything but artillery. The gallant Twentieth Brigade, which had done such great work at Ypres in October, came into action this day and stormed up to the strongholds of the Moulin-du-Piètre. One of them with three hundred Germans inside was carried by the 2nd Borders, the defenders being made prisoners. All the regiments of the brigade—the 2nd Scots Guards, the 1st



A BAYONET CHARGE BY INDIAN TROOPS—SUPPORTED
"IT WAS THEIR FIRST REAL CHANCE OF ATTACK UPON A

Grenadiers, the 2nd Gordons, and their Territorial comrades, the 6th Gordons—lost heavily in this most desperate of all forms of fighting. Colonel McLean of the latter regiment died at the head of his men. "Go about your duty," was his last speech to those who tended him. The Grenadiers fought like heroes, and one of them, Corporal Fuller, performed the extraordinary feat of heading off fifty Germans by fleetness of foot, and single-handed compelling the surrender of all of them. At the other end of the line, the Twenty-fifth Brigade, led by the Rifle Brigade, also made desperate efforts to get on, but were brought to a standstill by the trenches and machine-guns in the houses. The losses of the British, however, upon this day were heavy, but they were a small matter compared to those of the Germans, who made several counter-attacks in close formation from dawn onwards in the vain hope of recovering the ground that had been lost. It is doubtful if in the whole war greater slaughter has been inflicted in a shorter time and in so confined a space as in the case of some of these advances, where whole dense bodies of infantry were caught in the converging fire of machine-guns and rifles. In front of the 1st Worcesters, of the Twenty-fourth Brigade, alone more than a thousand dead were counted. From the ridge of Aubers, half a mile to the eastward, down to the front of the Indian and British line, the whole sloping countryside was mottled grey with the bodies of the fallen. All that the British had suffered in front of the barbed wire

BY A BRITISH GRENADE THROWER—AT NEUVE CHAPELLE.
LARGE SCALE, AND THEY ROSE GRANDLY TO THE OCCASION."

upon the 10th was repaid with heavy interest during the counter-attacks of the 12th. Gradually they faded away and were renewed no more. For the first time in the war the Germans finally abandoned a position that they had lost, and made no further attempt to retake it. The Battle of Neuve Chapelle was at an end, and the British, though their accomplishment fell far short of their hopes, had none the less made a permanent advance of a thousand yards along a front of three thousand, and obtained a valuable position for their operations in the future. The sappers were busy all evening in wiring and sand-bagging the ground gained, while the medical organization, which was strained to the uttermost, did its work with a bravery and a technical efficiency which could not be surpassed.

RESULT OF BATTLE OF NEUVE CHAPELLE.

Upon the last day of the fighting some seven hundred more prisoners had been taken, bringing the total number to thirty officers and one thousand six hundred and fifty men. The original defenders had been men of the Seventh German Corps, raised from Karlsruhe in Westphalia; but the reinforcements which suffered so heavily were either Saxons or Bavarians. The losses of the Germans were estimated at eighteen thousand men. The British losses were very heavy, consisting of five hundred and sixty-two officers and twelve thousand two hundred and thirty-nine men. Some eighteen hundred of these were returned as "Missing," but these were the men who fell in the advanced attack upon ground which was not retained. Only the wounded fell into the enemy's hands. The Fourth Corps lost seven thousand five hundred men, and the Indians about four thousand.

Of the six brigades of the Fourth Corps, all suffered about equally, except the Twenty-second, which was not so hard hit as the others. The remaining brigades lost over twenty-five per cent. of their numbers, but nothing of their efficiency and zeal, as they were very soon to show in the later engagements. When one remembers that Julius Cæsar describes an action as a severe one upon the ground that every tenth man was wounded, it may be conjectured that he would have welcomed a legion of Scottish Rifles or Sherwood Foresters. Certainly no British soldier was likely to live long enough to have his teeth worn down by the ration bread, as was the case with the Tenth Legion. The two units named may have suffered most, but the 2nd Lincolns, 2nd Berkshires, 2nd Borders, 2nd Scots Fusiliers, 1st Irish Rifles, 2nd Rifle Brigade, the two battalions of Gordons, and the 1st Worcesters were all badly cut up. Of the five commanding officers of the Twentieth Brigade, Uniacke of the 2nd Gordons, McLean

of the 5th Gordons, and Fisher Rowe of the Grenadiers were killed, and Paynter of the 2nd Scots Guards was wounded. The only survivor, the colonel of the Borders, was shot a few days later. It was said at the time of the African War that the British colonels had led their men up to and through the gates of Death. The words were still true. Of the brave Indian Corps, the 1st Seaforths, 2nd Leicesters, 39th Garhwalis, with the 3rd and 4th Gurkhas, were the chief sufferers.

Such was the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, a fierce and murderous encounter in which every weapon of modern warfare—the giant howitzer, the bomb, and the machine-gun—was used to the full, and where the reward of the victor was a slice of ground no larger than a moderate farm. And yet the moral prevails over the material, and the fact that a Prussian line, built up with four months of labour, could be rushed in a couple of hours, and that by no exertion could a German set foot upon it again, was a hopeful first lesson in the spring campaign.

On March 12th an attack was made upon the enemy's trenches south-west of the village of Wytschaete—the region where, on November 1st, the Bavarians had forced back the lines of our cavalry. The advance was delayed by the mist, and eventually was ordered for four in the afternoon. It was carried out by the 1st Wilts and the 3rd Worcesters, of the Seventh Brigade (Ballard), advancing for two hundred yards up a considerable slope. The defence was too strong, however, and the attack was abandoned with a loss of twenty-eight officers and three hundred and forty-three men. It may be said, however, to have served the general purpose of diverting troops from the important action in the south. It is to be hoped that this was so, as the attack itself, though fruitless, was carried out with unflinching bravery and devotion.

ACTION OF ST. ELOI.

On March 14th, two days after the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, the Germans endeavoured to bring about a counter-stroke in the north which should avenge their defeat, arguing, no doubt, that the considerable strength which Haig's First Army had exhibited in the south meant some subtraction from Smith-Dorrien at the other end of the line. This new action broke out at the hamlet of St. Eloi, some miles to the south-east of Ypres, a spot where many preliminary bickerings and a good deal of trench activity had heralded this more serious effort. This particular section of the line was held by the Eighty-second Brigade (Longley's) of the Twenty-seventh Division (Snow), the whole quarter being under the supervision of General Plumer. There was a small mound in a brickfield to the south-east of the village with trenches upon either side of it which were held by the men of the 2nd Cornish Light Infantry. It is a mere clay dump about seventy feet long and twenty feet high. After a brief but furious bombardment, a mine which had been run under this mound was exploded at five in the evening, and both mound and trenches were carried by a rush of German stormers. These trenches in turn enfiladed other ones, and a considerable stretch was lost, including two support trenches west of the mound and close to it, two breastworks and trenches to the north-east of it, and the southern end of St. Eloi village.

So intense had been the preliminary fire that every wire connecting with the rear had been severed, and it was only the actual explosion upon the mound—an explosion which buried many of the defenders, including two machine-guns with their detachments—which made the situation clear to the artillery in support. The Nineteenth and Twentieth Brigades concentrated their thirty-six eighteen-pounders upon the mound and its vicinity. The German infantry were already in possession, having overwhelmed the few survivors of the 2nd Cornwalls and driven back the 2nd Irish Fusiliers, who were either behind the mound or in the adjacent trenches to the east of the village. The stormers had rushed forward, preceded by a swarm of men carrying bombs and without rifles. Behind them came a detachment of sappers with planks, fascines, and sandbags, together with machine-gun detachments, who dug themselves instantly into the shattered mound. The whole German organization and execution of the attack was admirable. As the survivors of the British front line fell back, two companies of the 1st Cambridge Territorials took up a rallying position. The situation was exceedingly obscure from the rear, for, as already stated, all wires had been cut, but daring personal reconnaissance by individual officers, notably Captain Follett and Lieutenant Elton, cleared it up to some extent. By nine o'clock preparations had been made for a counter-attack, the 1st Leinsters and 1st Royal Irish, of the Eighty-second Brigade, being brought up, while Fortescue's Eightieth Brigade was warned to support the movement.

It was pitch-dark, and the advance, which could only be organized and started at two in the morning, had to pass over very difficult ground. The line was formed by two companies of the Royal Irish, the Leinster Regiment, and the 4th Rifles in general support. The latter regiment was guided to their position by Captain Harrison, of the Cornwalls, who was unfortunately shot, so that the movement, so far as they were concerned, become disorganized. Colonel Prowse, of the Leinsters, commanded the attack. The Irishmen rushed forward, but the Germans fought manfully, and there was a desperate struggle in the darkness, illuminated only by the quick red flash of the guns and the flares thrown up from the trenches. By the light of these the machine-guns installed upon the mound held up the advance of the Royal Irish, who tried bravely to carry the position, but were forced in the end, after losing Colonel Forbes, to be content with the nearest house, and with gaining a firm grip upon the village. The Leinsters made good progress and carried first a breastwork and then a trench in front of them, but could get no farther. About four-thirty

the Eightieth Brigade joined in the attack. The advance was carried out by the 4th Rifle Brigade upon the right and the Princess Patricia's (Canadians) upon the left, with the Shropshires and the 3rd Rifles in support. It was all-important to get in the attack before daylight, and the result was that the dispositions were necessarily somewhat hurried and incomplete. The Canadians attacked upon the left, but their attack was lacking in weight, being confined to three platoons, and they could make no headway against the fire from the mound. They lost three officers and twenty-four men in the venture. Thesiger's 4th Rifle Brigade directed its attack, not upon the mound, but on a trench at the side of it. This was carried with a rush by Captain Mostyn Pryce's company. Several obstacles were also taken in succession by the Riflemen, but though repeated attempts were made to get possession of the mound, all of them were repulsed. One company, under Captain Selby-Smith, made so determined an attack upon one barricade that all save four were killed or wounded, in spite of which the barricade was actually carried. A second one lay behind, which was taken by Lieutenant Sackville's company, only to disclose a third one behind. Two companies of the Shropshires were brought up to give weight to the further attack, but already day was breaking and there was no chance of success when once it was light, as all the front trenches were dominated by the mound. This vigorous night action ended, therefore, by leaving the mound itself and the front trench in the hands of the Germans, who had been pushed back from all the other trenches and the portion of the village which they had been able to occupy in the first rush of their attack. The losses of the British amounted to forty officers and six hundred and eighty men—killed, wounded, and missing, about a hundred coming under the last category, who represent the men destroyed by the explosion. The German losses were certainly not less, but it must be admitted that the mound, as representing the trophy of victory, remained in their hands. In the morning of the 15th the Germans endeavoured to turn the Leinsters out of the trench which they had recaptured, but their attack was blown back, and they left thirty-four dead in front of the position.

It is pleasing in this most barbarous of all wars to be able to record that all German troops did not debase themselves to the degraded standards of Prussia. Upon this occasion the Bavarian general in charge consented at once to a mutual gathering in of the wounded and a burying of the dead—things which have been a matter of course in all civilized warfare until the disciples of Kultur embarked upon their campaign. It is also to be remarked that in this section of the field a further amenity can be noted, for twice messages were dropped within the British lines containing news as to missing aviators who had been brought down by the German guns. It was hoped for a time that the struggle, however stern, was at last about to conform to the usual practices of humanity—a hope which was destined to be wrecked for ever upon that crowning abomination—the poisoning of Langemarck.

A month of comparative quiet succeeded this desperate business of Neuve Chapelle, the Germans settling down into their new position and making no attempt to regain their old ones. Both sides were exhausted, though in the case of the Allies the exhaustion was rather in munitions than in men. The regiments were kept well supplied from the depots, and the brutality of the German methods of warfare ensured a steady supply of spirited recruits. That which was meant to cow had in reality the effect of stimulating. It is well that this was so, for so insatiable are the demands of modern warfare that already after eight months the whole of the regiments of the original expeditionary force would have absolutely disappeared but for the frequent replenishments, which were admirably supplied by the central authorities. They had been far more than annihilated, for many of the veteran corps had lost from one and a half times to twice their numbers. The 1st Hants at this date had lost two thousand seven hundred out of an original force of one thousand two hundred men, and its case was by no means an exceptional one. Even in times of quiet there was a continual toll exacted by snipers, bombers, and shells along the front which ran into thousands of casualties per week. The off-days of Flanders were more murderous than the engagements of South Africa. Now and then a man of note was taken from the Army in this chronic and useless warfare. The death of General Gough, of the staff of the First Army, has already been recorded. Colonel Farquhar, of the Princess Patricia Canadians, lost his life in a similar fashion, while on April 14th General Maude, of the Thirteenth Brigade, a very valuable man, was badly wounded.

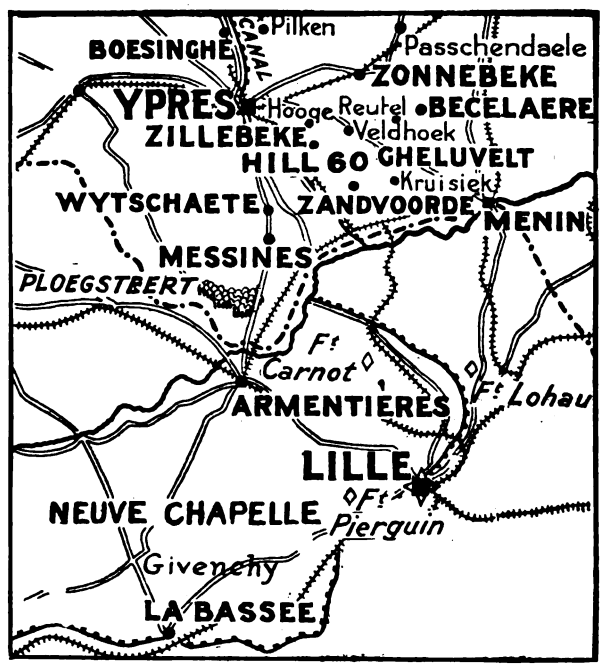
BATTLE OF HILL 60.

On April 17th there began a contest which was destined to rage with great fury, though at intermittent intervals, for several weeks. This was the fight for Hill 60. Hill 60 was a low ridge about fifty feet high and two hundred and fifty yards from end to end, which faced the Allied trenches in the Zillebeke region to the south-east of Ypres. This portion of the line had been recently taken over by Smith-Dorrien's Army from the French, and one of the first tasks which the British had set themselves was to regain the hill, which was of considerable strategic importance, because by their possession of it the Germans were able to establish an observation post and direct the fire of their guns behind towards any portion of the British line which seemed to be vulnerable. With the hill in British hands it would be possible to move troops from point to point without their being overseen and subjected to fire. Therefore the British had directed their mines towards the hill, and ran six mines underneath it, each of them ending in a chamber which contained a ton of gunpowder. This work was done by Major Norton Griffiths and the 171st Mining Com-

pany Royal Engineers. At seven in the evening of Saturday, April 17th, the whole was exploded with terrific effect. Before the smoke had cleared away the British infantry had dashed from their trench and the hill was occupied, A handful of dazed Germans were taken prisoners and one hundred and fifty were buried under the *débris*.

STORMING OF THE HILL.

The storming party was drawn from two regiments of the veteran Thirteenth Brigade, and the Brigadier Wanless O'Gowan was in general control of the operations under General Morland, of the Fifth Division. The two regiments immediately concerned were the 1st Royal West Kents and the 2nd Scottish Borderers. Major Joslin, of the Kents, led the assault, and C Company of that regiment, under Captain Moulton Barrett, was actually the first to reach the crest while it was still rocking and heaving from the immense explosion. Sappers of the 2nd Home Counties Company raced up with the infantry, bearing sand-bags and entrenching tools to make good the ground, while a ponderous backing of artillery searched on every side to break up the inevitable counter-attack. There was desperate digging upon the hill to raise some cover, and especially to cut back communication trenches to the rear. Without an overcrowding which would have been dangerous under artillery fire, there was only room for one company upon the very crest. The rest were in supporting trenches immediately behind. By half-past one in the morning of the 18th the troops were dug in, but the Germans, after a lull which followed the shock, were already thickening for the attack. Their trenches came up to the base of the hill, and many of their snipers and bomb-throwers hid themselves amid the darkness in the numerous deep holes with which the whole hill was pocked. Showers of bombs fell upon the British line, which held on as best it might.



THE SCENE OF THE FIGHTING ROUND NEUVE CHAPELLE AND HILL 60.

At 3.30 a.m. the Scots Borderers pushed forward to take over the advanced fire trench from the Kents, who had suffered severely. This exchange was an expensive one, as several officers, including Major Joslin, the leader of the assault, Colonel Sladen, and Captains Dering and Burnett, were killed or wounded, and in the confusion the Germans were able to get more of their bombers thrown forward, making the front trench hardly tenable. The British losses up to this time had almost entirely arisen from these bombs, and two attempts at regular counter-attacks had been nipped in the bud by the artillery fire, aided by motor machine-guns. As the sky was beginning to whiten in the east, however, there was a more formidable advance, supported by heavy and incessant bombing, so that at half-past five the 2nd West Ridings were sent forward, supported by the 1st Bedfords from the Fifteenth Brigade. A desperate fight ensued. With bomb and bayonet men stood up to each other at close quarters, neither side flinching from the slaughter. By seven o'clock the Germans had got a grip of part of the hill crest while the weary Yorkshiremen, supported by their fellow-countrymen of the 2nd Yorkshire Light Infantry, were hanging on to the broken ground and the edge of the mine craters. From then onwards the day was spent by the Germans in strengthening their hold, and by the British in preparing for a renewed assault. This second assault, more formidable than the first, since it was undertaken against an expectant enemy, was fixed for six o'clock in the evening.

At the signal five companies of infantry, three from the West Ridings and two from the Yorkshire Light Infantry, rushed to the front. The losses of the storming party were heavy, but nothing could stop them. Of C Company of the West Ridings only Captain Barton and eleven men were left out of a hundred, but none the less they carried the point at which their charge was aimed. D Company lost all its officers, but the men carried on. After a fierce struggle the Germans were ejected once again, and the whole crest held by the British. The losses had been very heavy, the various craters formed by the mines and the heavy shells being desperately fought for by either party. It was

about seven o'clock on the evening of the 18th that the Yorkshiremen of both regiments drew together in the dusk and made an organized charge across the whole length of the hill, sweeping it clear from end to end, while the 59th Company Royal Engineers helped in making good the ground. It was a desperate tussle, in which men charged each other like bulls, drove their bayonets through each other, and hurled bombs at a range of a few yards into each other's faces Seldom in the war has there been more furious fighting, and in the whole Army it would have been difficult to find better men for such work than the units engaged.

From early morning of that day till late at night the Brigadier-General O'Gowan was in the closest touch with the fighting line, feeding it, binding it, supporting it, thickening it, until he brought it through to victory. His Staff-Captain Egerton was killed at his side, and he had several narrow escapes. The losses were heavy and the men exhausted, but the German defence was for the time completely broken, and the British took advantage of the lull to push fresh men into the advanced trenches and withdraw the tired soldiers. This was done about midnight on the 18th, and the fight from then onwards was under the direction of General Northey, who had under him the 1st East Surrey, the 1st Bedfords, and the 9th London (Queen Victoria) Rifles. Already in this murderous action the British casualties had been fifty officers and fifteen hundred men, who lay, with as many of the Germans, within a space no larger than a moderate meadow.

During the whole of the daylight hours of April 19th a furious bombardment was directed upon the hill, on and behind which the defenders were crouching. Officers of experience described this concentration of fire as the worst that they had ever experienced. Colonel Griffith of the Bedfords held grimly to his front trench, but the losses continued to be heavy. During that afternoon a new phenomenon was observed for the first time—an indication of what was to come. Officers seated in a dug-out immediately behind the fighting line experienced a strong feeling of suffocation, and were driven from their shelter, the candles in which were extinguished by the noxious air. Shells bursting on the hill set the troops coughing and gasping. It was the first German experiment in the use of poison—an expedient which is the most cowardly in the history of warfare, reducing their army from being honourable soldiers to the level of assassins, even as the sailors of their submarines had been made the agents for the cold-blooded murder of helpless civilians. Attacked by this new agent, the troops still held their ground.

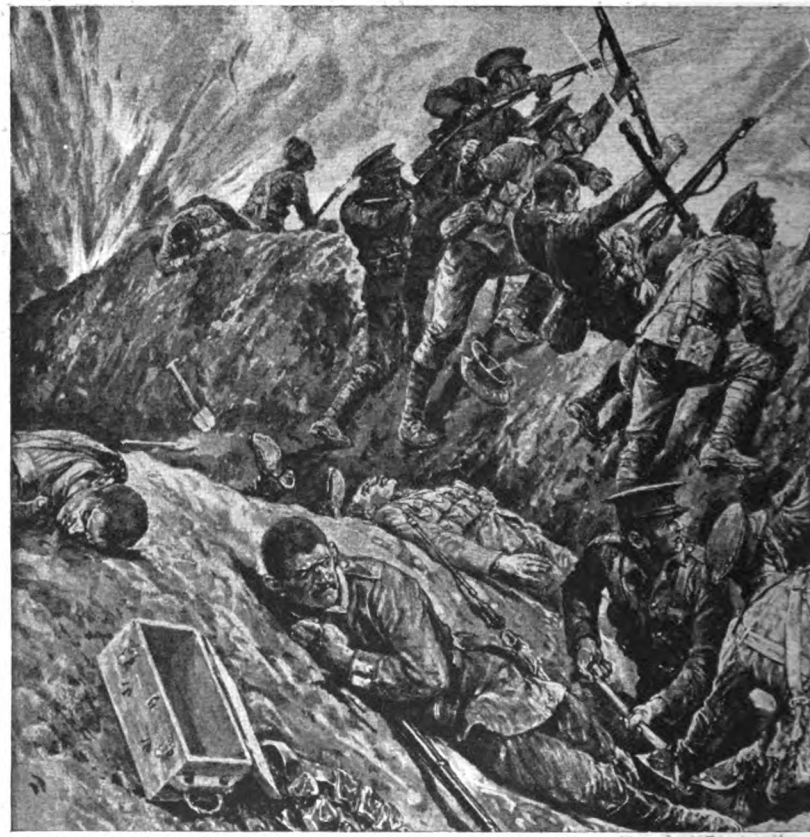
DESPERATE FIGHTING.

Tuesday, April 20th, was another day of furious shell-fire. A single shell upon that morning blew in a parapet and buried Lieutenant Watson with twenty men of the Surreys. The Queen Victorias under Colonel Shipley upheld the rising reputation of the Territorial troops by their admirable steadiness. Major Lees, Lieutenant Summerhays, and many others died an heroic death; but there was no flinching from that trench which was so often a grave. As already explained, there was only one trench and room for a very limited number of men on the actual crest, while the rest were kept just behind the curve, so as to avoid a second Spion Kop. At one time upon this eventful day a handful of London Territorials under a boy officer, Woolley of the Victorias, were the only troops upon the top, but it was in safe keeping none the less. This officer received the Victoria Cross. Hour after hour the deadly bombardment went on. About seven-thirty in the evening the bombers of the enemy got into some folds in the ground within twenty yards and began a most harassing attack. All night, under the sudden glare of star shells, there were a succession of assaults which tried the half-stupefied troops to the utmost. Soon after midnight in the early morning of Wednesday, April 21st, the report came in to the Brigadier that the 1st Surrey in the trenches to the left had lost all their officers except one subaltern. As a matter of fact, every man in one detachment had been killed or wounded by the grenades. It was rumoured that the company was falling back, but on a message reaching them based upon this supposition, the answer was, "We have not budged a yard, and have no intention of doing so." At two-thirty in the morning the position seemed very precarious, so fierce was the assault and so worn the defence. Of A Company of the Surreys only fifty-five privates were left out of one hundred and eighty, while of the five officers none were now standing, Major Paterson and Captain Wynyard being killed, while Lieutenant Roupell, who got the Cross, and two others were wounded. It was really a subalterns' battle, and splendidly the boys played up.

All the long night trench-mortars and mine-throwers played upon them, while monstrous explosions flung shattered khaki figures amid a red glare into the drifting clouds of smoke, but still the hill was British. With daylight the 1st Devons were brought up into the fight, and an hour later the hill was clear of the enemy once more, save for a handful of snipers concealed in the craters of the north-west corner. In vain the Germans tried to win back a foothold. Nothing could shift that tenacious infantry. Field-guns were brought up by the attackers and fired at short range at the parapets hastily thrown up, but the Devons lay flat and held tight. It had been a grand fight. Heavy as were the strokes of the Thor hammer of Germany, they had sometimes bent but never shattered the iron line of Britain. Already the death-roll had been doubled, and a hundred officers with three thousand of our men were stretched upon that little space, littered with bodies and red with blood from end to end. But now the action was at last drawing to its close. Five days it had raged with hardly a break. British guns were now run up and drove the German ones to cover.

Bombers who still lurked in the craters were routed out with the bayonet. In the afternoon of the 21st the fire died gradually away and the assaults came to an end. Hill 60 remained with the British. The weary survivors were relieved, and limped back singing ragtime music to their rest-camps in the rear, while the 2nd Cameron Highlanders, under Colonel Campbell, took over the gruesome trenches.

It was a fine feat of arms for which the various brigadiers, with General Morland of the Fifth Division, should have the credit, though ever in the background was the cool, tenacious Smith-Dorrien, never flurried, never beaten, cool himself and a source of coolness to others. It was not the possession of the little mound—important as that might be, it could not justify so excessive a loss of life, whether German or British. Hill 60 was a secondary matter. What was really being fought for was the ascendancy of the British or the Prussian soldier—that subtle thing which would tinge every battle which might be fought thereafter. Who would cry "Enough!" first? Who would stick it to the bitter end? Which had the staying-power when tried out to a finish? The answer to that question was of more definite military importance than an observation post, and it was worth our three thousand slain or maimed to have the award of the God of battles to strengthen us hereafter.



2nd LIEUT. G. H. WOOLLEY WINNING THE FIRST V.C. AWARDED "AT ONE TIME A HANDFUL OF LONDON TERRITORIALS UNDER TROOPS UPON THE TOP, BUT IT WAS IN SAFE KEEPING NONE

This description may well be ended by the general order in which Sir John French acknowledged the services of the troops engaged in this arduous affair:—

> "I congratulate you and the troops of the Second Army on your brilliant capture and retention of the important position at Hill 60. Great credit is due to Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Ferguson, commanding Second Corps; Major-General Morland, commanding Fifth Division; Brigadier-General Wanless O'Gowan, commanding Thirteenth Brigade; and Brigadier-General Northey, commanding Fifteenth Brigade for their energy and skill in carrying out the operations. I wish particularly to express my warmest admiration for the splendid dash and spirit displayed by the battalions of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Brigades which took part under their respective commanding officers. This has been shown in the first seizure of the position, by the fire attack of the Royal West Kents and the King's Own Scottish Borderers, and in the heroic tenacity with which the hill has been held by the other battalions of these brigades against the most violent counter-attacks and terrific artillery bombardment. I also must commend the skilful work of the Mining Company R.E., of the 59th Field Company R.E., and 2nd Home Counties Field Company R.E., and of the Artillery. I fully recognize the skill and foresight of Major-General Bulfin, commanding Twenty-eighth Division, and his G.R.E., Colonel Jerome, who are responsible for the original conception and plan of the undertaking."

It will be noticed that in his generous com-

TO A TERRITORIAL—AN HEROIC EXPLOIT ON HILL 60.
A BOY OFFICER, WOOLLEY OF THE VICTORIAS, WERE THE ONLY THE LESS. THIS OFFICER RECEIVED THE VICTORIA CROSS."

mendation Sir John French quotes the different separate units of Engineers as a token of his appreciation of the heavy work which fell upon them before as well as during the battle. Many anecdotes were current in the Army as to the extraordinary daring and energy of the subterranean workers, who were never so happy as when, deep in the bowels of the earth, they were planning some counter-mine with the tapping of the German picks growing louder on their ears. One authentic deed by Captain Johnston's 171st Mining Company may well be placed upon record. The sapping upon this occasion was directed against the Peckham Farm held by the Germans. Finding that the enemy was countermining, a *camouflet* was laid down which destroyed their tunnel. After an interval a corporal descended into the shaft, but was poisoned by the fumes. An officer followed him and seized him by the ankles, but became unconscious. A private came next and grabbed the officer, but lost his own senses. Seven men in succession were in turn rescuers and rescued, until the whole chain was at last brought to the surface. Lieutenants Severne and Williams, with Corporal Gray and Sappers Hattersley, Hayes, Lannon, and Smith, were the heroes of this incident. It is pleasant to add that though the corporal died, the six others were all resuscitated.

A MILITARY CRIME.

It is with a feeling of loathing that the chronicler turns from such knightly deeds as these to narrate the next episode of the war, in which the gallant profession of arms was degraded to the level of the assassin, and the Germans, foiled in fair fighting, stole away a few miles of ground by the acts of the murderer. So long as military history is written, the poisoning of Langemarck will be recorded as a loathsome incident by which warfare was degraded to a depth unknown among savages, and a great army, which had long been honoured as the finest fighting force in the world, became in a single day an object of horror and contempt, flying to the bottles of a chemist to make the clearance which all the cannons of Krupp were unable to effect. The crime was no sudden outbreak of spite, nor was it the work of some unscrupulous subordinate. It could only have been effected by long preparation, in which the making of great retorts and wholesale experiments upon animals had their place. Our generals and even our papers heard some rumours of such doings, but dismissed them as being an incredible slur upon German honour. It proved now that it was only too true, and that it represented the deliberate, cold-blooded plan of the military leaders. Their lies, which are as much part of their military equipment as their batteries, represented that the British had themselves used such devices in the fighting on Hill 60. Such an assertion may be left to the judgment of the world.

(To be continued.)

The CASTAWAYS.

By

W. W. JACOBS.

Illustrated by Will Owen.

CHAPTER XXI.

"IT was Markham that struck the first blow," said Tollhurst, as he received the nervous congratulations of the ladies. "He sent the sentry to sleep and then let me out. The rest was quite easy. I looked after that."

"With his fist," said Tollhurst. "It's quicker than the open hand. Markham knows how to use his hands a bit, and he was in a pretty bad temper, too. He's coming out quite strong. Knight, you had better get hold of something; I don't think there will be any more trouble, but it is as well to be ready."

"I'll borrow Albert's penknife," said

"'IT WAS MARKHAM THAT STRUCK THE FIRST BLOW,' SAID TOLLHURST, AS HE RECEIVED THE NERVOUS CONGRATULATIONS OF THE LADIES."

"Sent the sentry to sleep?" murmured Mrs. Jardine.

"Hypnotized him," explained Miss Flack.

Knight, scowling. "Or perhaps I can find something in Mrs. Ginnell's work-basket."

"It's nothing to joke about," said Mrs.

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Jardine, severely. "We might all have been killed."

"Or landed on desert islands," said Miss Flack, with a shiver. "Fancy last night—all alone on that little rock, beset by surging seas! I couldn't sleep for thinking of it—not a wink."

"It's all right now," said Tollhurst, confidently. "We'll soon have them on board again. The bridge is under my orders, and we are on our way back to the island."

There was a chorus of admiration as all eyes turned on the strong man. Knight, gravely perturbed at this threatened blow to his plans, went moodily outside. The spectacle of Pope doing sentry-go on the deck with his rifle at the slope helped to revive his drooping spirits.

"*Halt!*" he shouted, gruffly. "*Or-dah-ums — stàneasy — stan-dat-ease!* You may smoke."

Pope eyed him scornfully.

"For Heaven's sake leave him alone!" cried Maloney, appearing on deck. "He's got the darned thing loaded and cocked. If it goes off on his shoulder it's only the funnel or a cloud that will suffer. If he starts doing pat-a-cake things with it some of us will be killed."

"Perhaps you're right," said the other. "But I was only trying to do him a kindness. Surely there's no need for him to look like a cross between Captain Kidd and Julius Cæsar."

"It won't hurt 'em—they're both dead," said the doctor, impatiently. "Where's that boy Albert? I've put a bit of sticking-plaster on that fool in the fo'c'sle, but he will have it that he's dying, and he wants to see Albert to forgive him before he goes."

He caught sight of the page and beckoned.

"But I don't want to go if he's dying, sir," said the boy, with a scared expression. "I didn't mean to kill him. I just did my duty, but I'd no idea——"

"He's not dying," said the doctor, "but he thinks he is, and he says it'll ease his mind more than anything to see you. Off you go."

"What about sending an armed escort with him?" inquired Knight, with a glance at Pope.

"Better not," said the doctor, as the boy went off with lagging steps; "the man's nerves are quite bad enough as it is. Sudden joy might be fatal."

He nodded at the indignant Pope, and taking Knight by the arm led him off.

"What are you going to do now?" he inquired, as soon as they were out of earshot. "Seems to me the man-eating Tollhurst has queered your pitch. He has saved everybody, and is now on his way to rescue the victims on the island. It's his show, not yours. Still, it will make it more awkward than ever for Lady Penrose, to owe her safety to him."

"He's a muddling, officious, interfering ass!" said the offended Knight.

"He's master of this ship," remarked Maloney, with a grin. "And he's basking in the sunshine of the ladies' smiles. They all love a strong man. Did you happen to observe the way Miss Seacombe looked at him? *What's that?*"

"Sounds like a dog," said Knight, with a puzzled air, as faint and distant yelps sounded from below.

The doctor stood listening. "It's Albert," he said, with sudden conviction, as the noise, which had now merged into a lusty bellowing, came nearer. "What's wrong, I wonder?"

"Frightened, I suppose," replied Knight, as the boy, with one sleeve across his streaming eyes, came stumbling on deck.

Maloney laughed. "It's all right," he cried, catching the boy by the arm. "There's nothing to be scared about. He's no more dying than you are. He's been playing on your feelings."

"*Playing!*" wailed Albert. "I—I wish he—he had been—playing. I wish he *was* dying. He—he—he——"

"Well?" said the doctor, after waiting a reasonable time.

"He was laying in—bed when I got down," continued the boy, "and he s-said it was very k-kind of me to come and see 'im, and now he c-could die peaceful. He said he forgave me for—for k-killing 'im, and said he'd like to give me something to re-remember him by, and he—he asked me what I'd like."

"And what did you choose?" inquired the doctor, with commendable gravity.

"I said I'd have his watch and chain, sir," replied Albert, breaking out into a torrent of angry sobs, "and he—he—showed me a bit of rope with a kno-kno-knot—in the end of it, and said he—he'd give me that—instead. And he—he—*did!*"

He moved off to pour his sorrows into the ear of the indignant Markham; Maloney, keeping pace with Knight, resumed the interrupted conversation.

"Tollhurst will spoil everything," said the latter, gloomily. "Can't you get Vobster on his legs again?"

The doctor nodded. "I'm afraid of

ructions between him and Tollhurst," he said, slowly. "However, it's the only thing to be done, and he ought to be waking by now. Those guns will go off of themselves if we are not careful."

He went off to his cabin and, after lingering fondly over his drugs, proceeded to Vobster's. The skipper was in bed, but his big red face rose up from the pillow at the sound of the opening door, and his eyes blinked owlishly at the visitor.

"How are we?" inquired the latter.

Vobster sat upright and, rubbing his eyes vigorously, tried to collect his scattered faculties. In a mechanical fashion he took the glass the doctor offered and drained it. After which he shuddered and, snatching at the top of the sheet, used it as a napkin and toothbrush combined.

"Now get up and have a wash," said the doctor, turning on the water. "Give your head a good sluicing. Out with you."

He helped the other out of bed and, guiding his heavy feet to the washstand, took up the sponge and began to assist him. A liberal cascade down the spine did more than anything to restore the skipper's senses. It also restored the gift of speech. Pearls floated through the port-hole.

"You're better," said Maloney.

The skipper turned an infuriated face on him. "What are you doing?" he spluttered. "What's it all about? What are you doing in my cabin?"

"Think!" said the other, impressively.

The skipper spoke instead. He spoke at some length, using much repetition, as the heathen do.

"Carry your mind back," said the impassive doctor. "Who was it cut your bonds and carried you off to bed? Who took the gag out of your mouth and put a nice strong whisky and soda there instead?"

Captain Vobster reeled and sat down suddenly on the edge of his bunk. "Good Lord!" he said, thickly. "I'd forgotten."

He grabbed his trousers from the floor and put them on hastily. "What's happened?" he jerked out, as he fastened the braces. "Wait till I get my hands on that bo'sun. Where's Mr. Carstairs?"

"On the island," was the reply, "with Lady Penrose and her maid."

The skipper collapsed again.

"That's what comes of playing with edged tools," continued the doctor, severely. "There might have been murder done while you were sitting comfortably on your beam-ends unable to prevent it."

"What d'ye mean?" demanded the skipper, with a faint attempt at bluster.

"We both know," replied the other, calmly, "and out of pure good-nature I'm going to try and get you out of a mess that the master of a ship ought never to have got into."

Captain Vobster compressed his lips and, putting on his coat, buttoned it with painstaking care.

"Tarn is not to blame, mind," continued the doctor, holding up a finger. "He thought the orders came from you. Somebody took advantage of his innocence and carried the joke a little further, that's all."

"Who's been carrying on?" inquired the skipper, with a groan.

"Second officer," replied Maloney. "At least, he was until this morning, and then Captain Tollhurst took the ship and drove the men below. He is in command now."

The skipper took a deep breath; so deep and so long that the doctor turned instinctively and soused the sponge again.

"Drop it!" yelled the skipper, recovering. "Command! I'll soon show him who is in command aboard this ship."

"Go easy," counselled the doctor, catching him by the arm as he seized the handle of the door. "Remember that Tollhurst thinks this is all serious. He got rather a mauling yesterday, and the last he saw of you, you were tied up hand and foot by your own men. Take my advice: go up and take command as though nothing had happened. Don't attempt to disarm anybody, and don't discuss things. Pretend that they are doing it for their own amusement if you like. Laugh at them."

The skipper nodded. "I believe you're right," he said, slowly, and, opening the door, made his way above. Arrived on deck, he paused and, after the immemorial custom of shipmasters, glanced aloft before proceeding towards the bridge. Captain Tollhurst, a picturesque figure in white flannels, with a revolver thrust in his sash, stepped hastily towards him.

"Glad to see you again, cap'n," he said, significantly.

"Thankee," returned the skipper, continuing his leisurely progress.

Tollhurst eyed him in astonishment. "Rather curious times," he remarked.

"Aye, aye," said the other. He glanced out of the tail of his eye at Peplow, who came up carrying a shot-gun at the trail, and smiled broadly. Peplow glanced in pained amazement at Tollhurst.

"You seem amused," said the latter, stiffly.

"Don't mind me," replied the skipper, indulgently, as Miss Flack and Mrs. Jardine came out of the drawing-room and took up a position behind Tollhurst. "So long as you are happy and amused, that's everything."

"Amused? Do you think we are doing this for *fun?*" demanded Tollhurst, stiffly.

"I thought so," said the skipper, looking puzzled. "It's been a game all along, hasn't it? A little change from deck-quoits and things of that sort."

He beamed upon them in a paternal fashion and, placing his hand on the rail, mounted slowly to the bridge. Mr. Peplow, blushing painfully, went below and divested himself of his gun. Tollhurst, in an unobtrusive fashion, removed the pistol from his sash and slipped it into his pocket.

"He's gone crazy," he said, referring to Captain Vobster.

Mrs. Jardine exchanged glances with Miss Flack. "I wonder whether he's right," she said, musingly. "The whole thing is a mystery to me. It's very curious."

"Very," echoed Miss Flack. "I thought just now that Captain Tollhurst had saved us all, but of course if it was only a game—— Did you understand it was a game, Captain Tollhurst?"

"I don't know what he is talking about," replied Tollhurst, grinding his teeth.

"Makes us all look so ridiculous," said Knight, who had just joined the group. "I am so thankful now that I didn't succumb to temptation and convert myself into a portable armoury. Freddie's aspect was absolutely terrible."

"If it's a game," said Talwyn, with chilly emphasis, "I shall be glad to know who is responsible for it. I shall also be glad to hear Carstairs' opinion of it—when he returns."

He placed his hand on Tollhurst's arm and the pair disappeared into the smoke-room. Seamen appeared from below in ones and twos and went about their work. Mr. Tarn, making a belated appearance, was observed to be in close and confidential intercourse with Captain Vobster. Judging by his wriggling he appeared to be undergoing a somewhat stiff cross-examination; but it was evident from the wink he bestowed upon Mr. Biggs on his return that he had survived it.

"All right?" inquired Mr. Biggs, somewhat anxiously as he lounged up to him a few minutes later.

Mr. Tarn nodded. "I told 'im I done as I was told," he replied. "When he arst me who told me, I said the orders come from 'im in a manner of speaking, but I couldn't tell 'im 'ow if he was to cut me up in five million pieces. When I said p'r'aps I'd gone a bit beyond 'is orders he swore he 'adn't given me none. He's a bit excited—got to talking about wot he called my ugly mug afore he'd finished."

The skipper's excitement died down during the day and gave place to a condition of sulky uneasiness. Under the doctor's advice he turned a deaf ear to all questions, and the only satisfaction the passengers received was the news that the *Starlight* was proceeding as fast as her engines could carry her to the rescue of Carstairs and his companions in misfortune.

"And I hope that Mr. Carstairs will insist upon a full explanation," said Miss Flack.

"And then retail it to *us*," said Mrs. Jardine, in a thin voice. "I must confess that I am very interested."

It was the condition of everybody on board, as Knight, who paid a visit to the skipper in his cabin after lunch, told him.

"They're just bursting with it, aren't they?" he said, turning to Maloney, who had accompanied him.

"Let 'em burst," said Vobster, churlishly.

"At present," pursued Knight, "they're just guessing at things—putting two and two together, so to speak. What they'll say when they know the truth, I can't imagine. Tollhurst is the worst—he's been made to look a bit ridiculous, and he doesn't like it. He's got a cousin who is editor of a newspaper, and I expect the whole thing will be made public as soon as we get home."

"D——n the newspapers," said Vobster, "and the public," he added, impartially.

Knight murmured acquiescence. "Very awkward, all the same," he said, thoughtfully. "Of course it will be worse for you than anybody else. The idea of a skipper giving his crew orders to mutiny, and then tie him up as though he were going to play what the children call 'Honey-pots,' is almost incredible. Do you know the game?"

"You get out of my cabin," vociferated the indignant skipper. "Who asked you to come here?"

"Pleasure," said the unmoved Knight. "I merely came to try and do you a kindness, that's all. However, if you prefer to have your portrait in the public Press, with 'Captain Vobster, the Honey-pot Champion,' underneath——"

Maloney flung his arms round the skipper's waist just in time. Baulked of his prey, the latter subsided on the settee, and sat glaring darkly at his would-be benefactor.

"Do you a kindness," repeated Knight. "If this comes out it might be some time before you get a ship again. If you can keep your officers' mouths shut I think I can get you out of it."

"How?" inquired the other, still glaring.

"That's my affair," was the reply. "I've already cautioned Pope and the bo'sun to keep quiet, and if you'll put me ashore alone I think I can fix Carstairs. If the others get hold of him first it'll all come out."

"Suppose they want to go!" growled Vobster, considering.

"What's that got to do with it?" said Knight. "When we get to the island, put me ashore. If anybody else wants to go, don't let 'em. You're master of this ship, aren't you?"

Maloney caught the skipper's eye. "Better trust him," he said, encouragingly. "He's the most unscrupulous chap I ever met; but you can't be in a worse fix than you are."

The skipper sat pondering. "All right," he said at last, "have it your own way. And if you never come back I don't know that I shall be sorry."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE island was sighted about an hour later, and it was clear, from the behaviour of the passengers, that a landing on an extensive scale was contemplated. Boat-parties were arranged, and by universal consent a place was reserved for the bereaved Markham; Albert, in view of his sufferings in the general cause, was also included. On these preparations the skipper bestowed a frosty smile, but made no comment, and it was not until the *Starlight* was hove-to on the weather-side of the island and two little groups gathered by their respective boats that he showed his hand.

"Not go ashore?" demanded Tollhurst, in a loud voice. "Why not?"

"My orders," said the skipper, laconically.

"I don't understand," said Talwyn, coming forward haughtily. "Do you mean to say that you forbid us to go?"

"I don't say that," said Vobster; "you must do as you please. All I say is that you are not going in my boats."

"But this is preposterous!" exclaimed Tollhurst, as an indignant murmur arose from his friends. "We insist upon going. We are Mr. Carstairs' guests, and if we choose to go ashore we will. Pope, I suppose you are in charge while Carstairs is away; what are your orders?"

"I really think——" began Pope, in his deepest tones.

"Think as much as you like, sir," said Vobster, reddening. "I'm the only man that gives orders here!"

He turned away and paced slowly up and down as one of the boats was lowered. Tollhurst and Talwyn, eyeing him defiantly, went to the accommodation-ladder and endeavoured, but in vain, to push past the seamen in charge. Their anger was not lessened when they saw Knight trip jauntily down the ladder and step into the waiting boat.

"Why is he allowed to go?" demanded Tollhurst.

"My orders," repeated the skipper.

The oars dipped and the boat sped away. The noise of many people, all speaking at once, was borne after it, and Knight, turning his head, was oddly reminded of the mobbing of an owl. The demonstration was not concluded until Vobster had climbed to his perch on the bridge.

The lagoon was reached after a stiff pull, and the seamen, relaxing their efforts, took it easy across the smooth water in the direction of a tent on the beach. Four noble hearts throbbed as one as Miss Mudge, aroused by the sound of oars in rowlocks, burst out of the tent and stood frantically waving at them.

"It's all right, miss," said the bow-oar as the boat grounded and the men jumped out and hauled it on to the beach. "We've come to take you back."

Miss Mudge, clasping her hands dramatically, raised her eyes to the sky.

"I had given up all hope," she said, in moving tones. "Oh, if you only knew what I have suffered, you wouldn't——"

"Where's Mr. Carstairs?" interrupted Knight, sharply.

Miss Mudge pointed to the right. "The last I saw of him," she said, precisely, "he was walking along the beach with my lady. Shall I go and tell them you're here?"

"I'll go," said Knight, moving off. "You stay where you are."

Miss Mudge hesitated, and then, seating herself on the side of the boat and shading her eyes with her hand, looked out to sea. "Where is the yacht?" she inquired.

"T'other side, miss," said one of the men. He stood looking at her for a moment, and then perched himself delicately against the

side of the boat about a yard away. Inch by inch the intervening space disappeared.

"Bill," he said, softly, as another seaman prepared to seat himself on the left of the attraction, "if you and Joe and Bob like to go for to stretch your legs a bit, I'll stand by the boat."

"Aye, aye," said Bill, seating himself. "Was it very lonely, miss?"

Miss Mudge clasped her hands. "Oh, awful!" she said, with a shiver. "I didn't get a wink of sleep all night, I was so frightened."

Bill gave a sympathetic groan. "I couldn't sleep neither," he said, in a low voice. "Every moment, just as I was dropping off, I thought of you cast away 'ere, and woke up agin with a start."

"I didn't go to bed at all," said the voice of Joe from behind. "I felt as if I should choke if I laid down."

"It's a wonder to me he don't choke *now*," said Bill, in amazed accents.

"Or be struck dead," said Tom.

"But you helped to put me ashore," said the girl, severely. "You were all as bad as one another."

"We only done wot we was told, miss," said Joe, coming round the boat and seating himself on the beach at her feet. "Orders is orders, but I'd much rather 'ave been told to go up to the mast-head and chuck myself into the sea."

"He will be struck dead," said Tom, with conviction.

"It's all very dreadful," said Miss Mudge, clasping her hands again. "When I think of that Mr. Tarn having the cheek to take me up in his arms as if I was a bundle of washing, and you all howling like wild beasts, I don't know what to think. I shall never be the same again; my trust in my fellow-creatures has gone. I shall never see a sailor again without shuddering."

The information was received in pained silence, broken at last by Bill, who had been regarding with secret indignation the manœuvres of his shipmate on the beach.

"If you don't like that nasty oily 'ead in your lap, miss," he said, in tones of outraged propriety, "pull its 'air."

He waited hopefully, but, the well-bred Miss Mudge manifesting no signs of any intention to follow his advice, acted upon it himself. His ministrations, at first gentle, increased in power. Joe winced.

"You 'ave got strong fingers, miss," he said, in tones of soft reproach. "You're making my eyes fair water."

"Well, why don't you take that fat 'ead of yours away, then?" inquired the delighted Bill. "She's not wot you could call hurting of you."

He took a firmer grip, and a groan of anguish broke from the unfortunate Joe.

"HE TOOK A FIRMER GRIP, AND A GROAN OF ANGUISH BROKE FROM THE UNFORTUNATE JOE."

"Here, easy on, my dear!" he exclaimed, reaching up. "You don't know the strength of them pretty little fingers of yours. You've got—— BILL! S'welp me, you do that agin and I'll knock your ugly face off of you."

He sprang to his feet so suddenly that the conscience-stricken Bill went over backwards into the boat, half taking his fair companion with him. Placed on an even keel by the strong arm of Tom, she manifested no gratitude, and, after giving herself an angry shake, stalked off along the beach, followed at a respectful distance by four distressed sailormen.

In the meantime Knight, having drawn blank on the beach, had turned inland. His canvas shoes made no noise as he strode on, glancing right and left until, beyond a little group of cocoa-palms, he found what he sought. Side by side they stood looking out to sea, and the intruder noticed with gratified astonishment that Carstairs' arm was placed in a comfortable fashion around his companion's waist. For a few seconds Knight gazed his fill, and then, with a faint cough, blew them a yard apart.

"*Knight!*" said Carstairs, in amazement.

"How do you do?" said Knight, blandly, as he bowed to Lady Penrose. "I have come to beg you to return to the ship."

"Return to the ship?" repeated the bewildered Carstairs.

Knight nodded. "Everything is at sixes and sevens since you left us," he said, slowly. "We're in a state of civil war almost. Tollhurst got up another mutiny this morning, but that's all over, and Vobster is in command again. At least he was when I left, but it's quite possible by this time that Albert is in charge. Won't you come?"

"Come!" said Carstairs, helplessly. "*Come!* Do you think we left the ship of our own free will?"

Knight looked puzzled. "Didn't you?" he inquired. "Wasn't it part of the arrangement?"

"What arrangement?" inquired Carstairs, in well-acted surprise.

"Why, the mutiny you ordered. Wasn't that a part of it?"

"Certainly not," said Carstairs, glancing at Lady Penrose. "And what do you mean by 'the mutiny I ordered'?"

Knight smiled. "Oh, that's all right," he said, airily. "I've seen your instructions to the skipper. In fact, I've got 'em. Good

"CARSTAIRS' ARM WAS PLACED IN A COMFORTABLE FASHION AROUND HIS COMPANION'S WAIST."

job they fell into such safe hands. By the way, please accept my warmest congratulations. I am delighted. Delighted."

There was a long pause. "I don't know what you are talking about," said Carstairs, at last.

"Talking about," repeated Knight. "Why, your engagement to Lady Penrose. Everybody will be delighted when I tell them. It's a ripping—er—sequel."

"Engaged? What do you mean?" demanded Carstairs.

"Oh, sorry," said Knight, coolly. "I was merely judging by appearances. I naturally thought—anybody would have thought—they will all think——"

"I forbid you to say anything about it," interrupted Lady Penrose, angrily.

Knight bowed. "It is all so misleading," he murmured. "You arrange a mutiny and are set ashore under the most romantic circumstances, and when I discover you, making the best of things——"

"That'll do," said Carstairs, loudly. "And we did not arrange to be set ashore; nobody was more surprised than we were. It's an absolute mystery to us."

Knight sighed. "It's a censorious world, and you must admit that appearances are against you," he said, gently. "It will be very difficult to convince Mrs. Jardine. She has been shaking her head off nearly, and as for Tollhurst, he is simply raging. He got rather badly knocked about, and I'm afraid you will find it hard to give him satisfactory reasons for your little joke. After all, he is your guest, you know. What *did* you do it for?"

Carstairs made no reply.

"You're in a mess," continued Knight, "but if Lady Penrose will come to terms I think I can get you out of it. Money returned if not satisfied."

"Terms?" said Lady Penrose, regarding him scornfully.

Knight nodded. "Let me marry Winnie, and promise to do the best you can for Freddie, and I'll take the sole blame," he replied. "Nobody will have the slightest difficulty in believing me responsible for the outrage. It'll seem the most natural thing in the world to them. Otherwise——"

"No," said Lady Penrose, with sudden vehemence.

"Think it over," urged Knight. "Think of the long voyage home with Tollhurst and Mrs. Jardine."

"*No!*" said Lady Penrose again. "Tell them what you like and do what you like. I never thought much of you, and now I think less."

She turned to Carstairs and, holding herself very erect, started to walk back to the tent. Knight, a shade discomfited, followed in the rear, and they walked on in silence until they came in sight of Miss Mudge and her retinue.

"Well, if you won't accept my terms," said Knight, ranging himself alongside Carstairs, "virtue shall be its own reward. I'll sacrifice myself for friendship's sake. You keep quiet and I'll do the rest."

Lady Penrose turned to Carstairs. "Don't discuss things with him," she said, icily.

"The engagement," continued the unmoved Knight, "had better be kept secret for the present. And both of you try and look as disagreeable as you can."

Lady Penrose quickened her pace and walked straight towards the boat, and four sheepish mariners, touching their caps respectfully to Carstairs, pushed it into the water. With a subdued air Knight left the stern seats to the others and made his way to the bows. As the boat rounded the point and came into view of the ship he observed with much gratification that his two friends were looking distinctly uncomfortable.

"No signs of uncontrollable enthusiasm," he remarked with a cough as they approached the yacht, and Lady Penrose shivered despite herself as she looked at the row of silent figures lining the side. She waved her hand, and her friends waved silently in reply. The line arranged itself into a little group as she passed up the accommodation-ladder, and a babel of inquiries broke on her ears as she gained the deck, the voice of Mrs. Jardine being particularly insistent.

"Ask *him!*" shouted Carstairs, levelling a trembling forefinger at Knight, who was coming slowly up the ladder.

"Eh?" said Tollhurst and Talwyn together, with extraordinary emphasis.

Knight paused at the head of the ladder, and smiled guiltily. "Just a little joke of mine," he explained, "to relieve the tedium of the voyage."

"Joke!" exclaimed Mrs. Jardine, breaking an amazed silence. She turned suddenly upon Pope. "Why, you told us——" she began.

"I misled him," interrupted Knight. "At least, I told him to prepare you for a little surprise. It was a little surprise, wasn't it?"

Mrs. Jardine drew herself up and stood regarding him in speechless indignation, but

in the hubbub that ensued her temporary loss of voice was not noticed.

"Most extraordinary behaviour," said Talwyn. "Was it by your orders that I was hustled about the deck, and that one of the seamen put his dirty fist beneath my nose and told me to smell it? Eh?"

"And that I was knocked about and locked up in my cabin?" vociferated Tollhurst, regarding him fiercely.

"Mere animal spirits," said Knight. "Only their fun."

"Fun!" repeated Tollhurst, in a choking voice. "What are you going to do about it, Carstairs?" he demanded.

Carstairs shrugged his shoulders. "What can I do?" he inquired. "I can't have him thrown overboard. Better leave him to his conscience—if he's got any. I suppose we must be thankful that nobody was really hurt."

"Not his fault," said Maloney, in a deep voice, with a side-glance at the culprit. "If you're not careful it's an undertaker you'll be wanting aboard instead of a doctor. He's not safe to be at large."

"Let us hope he is ashamed of himself," said Miss Flack, piously.

It seemed to be an absurd hope, and Mrs. Jardine said so plainly. In the midst of a discussion inaugurated by Talwyn as to whether it would be possible for Vobster to confine the offender to his cabin for the remainder of the voyage, Knight thrust his hands in his pockets and sauntered off below.

His appearance at the dinner-table was the signal for a sudden lull in the conversation, a state of affairs which by no means affected his appetite. When, towards the end of the meal, he raised his glass and proposed "Sweethearts and Wives," Mrs. Jardine arose and, with a lingering glance at the savoury which had just been placed before her, left the table.

He had the grace, however, to stay on board next day while the rest of the party paid a visit to the island; a piece of self-sacrifice which enabled him to compare notes with Captain Vobster and put things on a shipshape and proper footing. Mr. Biggs, somewhat scared at the result of his handiwork, also came in for a little instruction.

The *Starlight* sailed from the island next day, and the ordinary routine was resumed. The days passed uneventfully, and Knight, left to himself, was observed to be making himself agreeable to various members of the crew, a circumstance which caused Mrs. Jardine and Miss Flack no little uneasiness. They even voiced their fears to Carstairs, and that gentleman, a little conscience-stricken, approached the sufferer as he sat smoking on deck that evening after dinner, with an idea of cheering him up.

"*Sssssss!*" hissed Knight. "Go away!"

"I thought——" began the other, mildly.

"I know," said Knight. "They all think. That's the worst of being popular. I can hardly keep Freddie and the others off. As for Mrs. Ginnell, I had to pinch her yesterday."

Carstairs stared at him. "Lady Penrose thinks——" he said.

"I know," interrupted the other. "That's what I want her to do. Now go away, there's a good chap. Leave me to pay the penalty of her misdeeds. If she's got any conscience at all——"

A grin of enlightenment dawned on Carstairs' face. "You young——" he began.

"Go away," said Knight, with dignity.

The thoughts of Lady Penrose materialized two evenings later. She came out of the lighted drawing-room and, peering through the darkness, made her way to the lonely figure that sat amidships smoking, and after a moment's hesitation sat down beside it.

"It's very good of you," she said, after a pause.

"Not at all," replied the truthful Knight.

There was another pause. "I think you have behaved very well," she said, slowly. "Much better than I thought you could."

"We all make mistakes," said Knight, ambiguously.

There was another silence; so long that he began to feel uneasy.

"I think perhaps I have misjudged you a little," she said at last, "and—and—if Winnie still wishes to marry you, she may."

Knight took her hand and raised it respectfully to his lips. "Thank you very much," he said, gratefully. "I am very glad to think that my opinion of you has been justified."

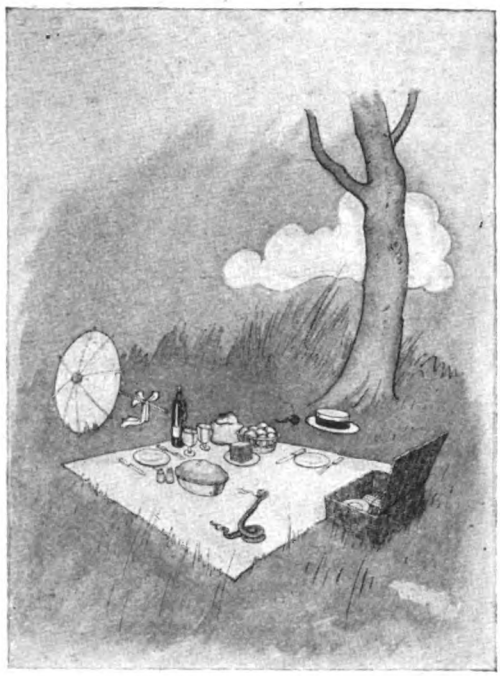
THE END.

"Problem" Pictures.

CAN YOU SUPPLY THE MISSING TITLES?

One of the most popular features of recent Academy Exhibitions has been the "Problem" picture—a picture in which the artist's meaning is capable of several different interpretations. So keen were the public to provide appropriate titles that we feel sure readers will welcome the accompanying amusing series of "Problem" pictures, drawn by the best black-and-white humorous artists of the day, and in order to give them ample time to tax their ingenuity and sense of humour we withhold the actual titles till next month.

I.—By W. HEATH ROBINSON.



2.—By H. M. BATEMAN.

3.—By RICARDO BROOK.

4.—By WILL OWEN.

5.—By ALFRED LEETE.

6.—By REG. F. SMITH.

7.—By A. P. F. RITCHIE

STORIES FROM THE FRENCH HUMORISTS.

III.

POOR FELLOW!

By ALPHONSE ALLAIS.

"SUCH things only happen to me!"

My well-known regard for the truth compels me to say that my friend's statement is beyond dispute. As he himself remarked, such things only happened to him!

Catastrophes? No, not catastrophes, but a never-ending succession of petty mischances and pin-pricks, such as surely can never have happened before to any mortal man.

In course of time he became so accustomed to this state of things that he took it almost as a matter of course, and would relate his most recent misadventures with the smile of a man whom the blows of fortune had left astounded but resigned.

"Such things only happen to me!" was the way he always wound up.

I always thought myself lucky to meet him, being certain that my thirst for novelty would find satisfaction—a rather cruel one, perhaps—in the account of his latest misfortunes.

"Anything new, old man?" I would ask, hypocritically. "Always happy and contented?"

"Contented! You're joking. Contented! But how are *you?*"

"Perfectly happy, thanks; happier even than I deserve."

"Happiness never goes by merit, or it would be about my turn."

"Still in trouble?"

"That's the one thing you can safely swear to. Just fancy—last Monday I passed the night at the police-station."

"At the police-station! You! the quietest man alive?"

"Precisely! I, the quietest man alive, passed the night in a police-cell."

"For what reason?"

"For being drunk and disorderly."

"Drunk and disorderly! You, the soberest man alive?"

"Precisely! I, the soberest man alive, passed a night in a cell for being drunk and disorderly!"

"But——"

"Oh, the whole thing's very simple. About six o'clock last Monday I met Martin, the Captain's cousin, in the street. He took me into the Irish bar and ordered a gin and soda. I have a perfect horror of these Anglo-Saxon messes, and I ordered a plain glass of vermouth. An hour after I was lying, blind to the world, in a cell at the police-station."

"Blind to the world! After a single glass of vermouth?"

"Precisely. Such things only happen to me! This is what occurred. You know they serve the gin there in decanters which they put before a customer so that he can help himself. Mistaking this for water, I filled up my glass of vermouth with the spirit——"

"Didn't you notice anything when you drank it?"

"Yes. I said to myself, 'This vermouth has a queer taste. It must be American vermouth. That's how it is.' Well, as soon as I got out of doors I began jumping over the seats on the boulevards and kissing the old women selling papers——"

"Poor old man."

"And so I landed in a police-cell. Such things only happen to me! Last week again——"

"What happened then?"

"I ordered a suit from a tailor who had been recommended to me—a stunning check suit. The first time I went out in it it came on to rain in torrents, and of course I had no umbrella (such things only happen to me!). Well, I went into the National Library to dry myself at a stove, and, as true as I stand here, my suit as it dried began to shrink and shrink, until I looked as if I had stolen the clothes from a boy of twelve."

"Oh, that might happen to anybody."

"Yes, but what could only happen to me was the tone of the tailor when I went to complain to him. He began by assuring me that waterproofs were not his speciality. I replied with a smile, 'Pardon me, but as your goods have lost about twenty per cent. of their surface, surely it would be only the right thing to take twenty per cent. off your bill!' How did he respond? 'Pardon *me*, sir,' he answered, with an insufferable air, 'but if my goods, instead of shrinking, had grown larger, would you have called here of your own accord to pay me extra in proportion?' What could a man reply to that?"

"Nothing, my dear fellow—nothing."

"What did I tell you, old man? Such things only happen to me."

"Well, in your love affairs, at least, I hope you are more fortunate?"

"Love affairs! Speaking of them, last Tuesday I went to dinner with the Craucks, and I fell desperately in love with Odile, the eldest daughter."

"I know Odile. A charming girl!"

"Desperately in love! The next day I met her at an evening party and asked permission to call on her again. She seemed a little surprised, and inquired for what reason I wished to come. You know what an ass a man feels when he is in love?"

"I know."

"'Well,' I said, 'I wish to come, mademoiselle, because I left something at your house.'

"'What was that?' she inquired.

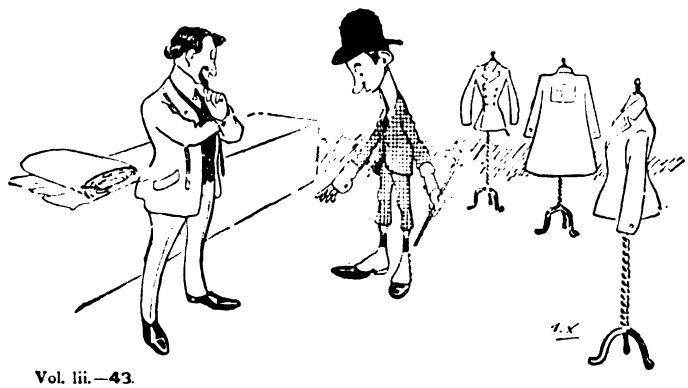
"'My heart!' I answered. It was not very witty, I dare say, but when a man is in earnest——"

"And what did she reply?"

"You would never imagine. 'I have not found the object you speak of,' she said, coolly. 'But when I reach home this evening I will tell the housemaid to look for it. *It may have been thrown away in the sweepings!*'"

"Poor, poor old fellow!"

"Such things only happen to me!"



This series of Stories from the French Humorists will be continued from time to time.

MULTUM IN PARVO.

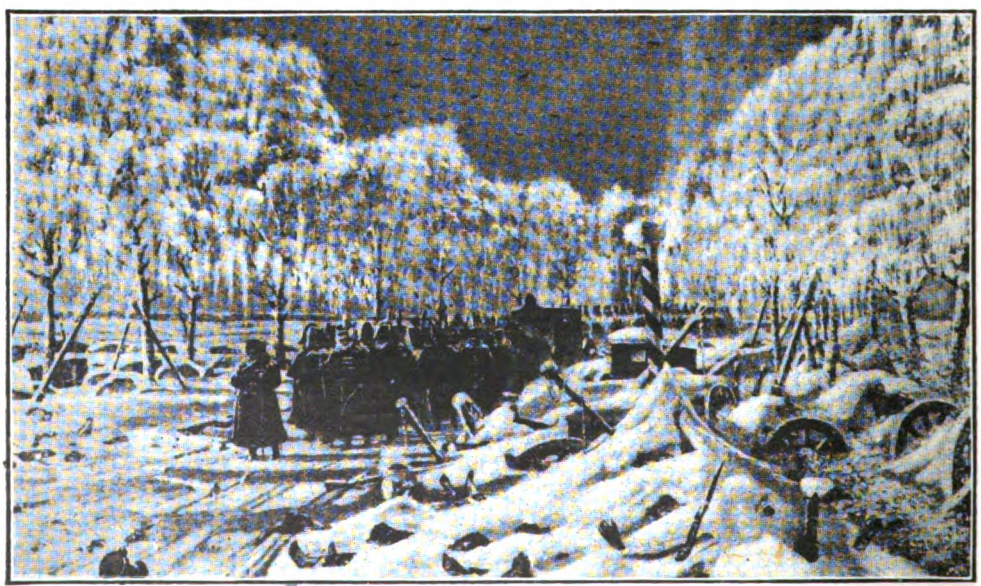
A COMPENDIUM OF SHORT ARTICLES.

THE PICTURE THAT APPALLED THE KAISER.

ATTENTION has recently been drawn in many quarters to an interview with M. Vasili Verestchagin, the famous Russian artist, published in THE STRAND MAGAZINE for April, 1899, in which are recorded some words spoken by the Kaiser which, in the light of present-day events, are of quite exceptional interest. In this interview M. Verestchagin said that when his pictures were on exhibition in Berlin the Kaiser went to see them.

"What did the Kaiser say?" M. Verestchagin was asked.

"He remained some time, and looked very earnestly at the pictures of Napoleon," said the artist. "One of them represents the Retreat. The army is marching along the great high road, anger and dismay on every face. Napoleon goes on in front. His course has been checked; Moscow, on which he had built so many hopes, was burnt to the ground. His army is hungry, cold, and discontented, and there is a look of unfathomable grief on his face. It is a picture of greatness in despair. It was on this picture that the Emperor gazed intently for a while, and then, turning away, he said, 'And in spite of that there will still be men who want to govern the world; but they will all end like this.'"



VERESTCHAGIN'S FAMOUS PICTURE, "THE RETREAT."

Thus, whatever other claims to greatness posterity may deny him, no one will dispute the Kaiser's right to the title of prophet.

Verestchagin's fine picture, "The Retreat," which drew these words from the Emperor, is very little known in this country, a fact which lends additional interest to the above reproduction.

THE WEKA: A BIRD WITH A FONDNESS FOR HUMAN SOCIETY.

BY JAMES DRUMMOND, F.L.S., F.Z.S.

THE curse of flightlessness imposed upon the weka, or Maori hen, does not seem to have affected the temperament of this New Zealand bird. Instead of being soured against the world by its affliction, it is the most genial and sociable bird the Dominion possesses.

Last year I visited the Gouland Downs, a wild, unfrequented, sub-alpine district in the heart of the Nelson province. When my two companions and I, after a day's tramp through forest and tussock, reached a deserted hut on the downs and threw our swags on the bunks, a weka appeared at the door, hesitated, and then walked in, and by manner, if not by actual words, expressed its pleasure at our presence. In five minutes, when the news of our arrival had gone forth, there were perhaps a score of wekas near the hut, some remaining half concealed in the tussocks, some peering out of the beech forest close by, and some coming boldly to the door, each taking a deep interest in our actions. At intervals all day and all night, as long as we stayed on the downs, wekas' shrill calls rang in our ears. The weka is both nocturnal and diurnal. In the evening it heralds the shadowy, mysterious twilight; in the early morning it is the last to farewell the darkness, the first to welcome the dawn. It seems to be noisier at night than at day, and noisier on moonlight nights than during rain. At about 7.30 p.m. one would begin to pipe several chains from our hut. In a few seconds the night would resound with answering calls, in almost the same key, from different directions. The calls were in two distinct notes, loud and pure, like the notes of a flute. Sometimes, when a company was together, one weka piped us and others joined, making a strange and medley chorus.

Perhaps the utter absence of anything like fastidiousness in the weka's taste accounts largely for its plentifulness. Its food supplies are inexhaustible. It eats anything that will go into its bill and down its throat. One weka seized upon a wooden matchbox we had thrown on the ground. It tore off the blue paper covering, and, to our surprise, gulped this down with as much satisfaction as it swallowed pieces of meat stolen from our table. Fat and butter are the weka's special weaknesses. Insects, worms, berries, crustaceans, and the larvæ of minute aquatic animals are acceptable. At our meals in the hut we could count on at least one of these birds appearing stealthily at the door with an inquiring air. It stepped forward silently and circumspectly, its attitude alert, its eyes shining with intelligence, inquisitiveness, and friendliness. As soon as it convinced itself that the friendly feeling was returned, it calmly picked crumbs from the floor. Sometimes I saw a weka shifting tufts of moss and pieces of wood with its strong bill. At other times I saw one picking berries from low plants, or wading knee-deep into the creeks that run in all directions across the downs and fishing with surprising skill for fresh-water crayfish and other crustaceans. Remains of crayfish found on the banks of the creeks prove that fishing expeditions are a very popular pastime.

Most birds have inherited a shyness of man. The weka seems to have inherited an instinct in the opposite direction. When aware of man's arrival in its haunts it comes out to meet him, with an obvious wish to make his acquaintance. The same instinct is possessed by a few other New Zealand birds, but not by any birds introduced into the Dominion from other countries. The weka's tameness is beyond all reason. It cannot even learn a lesson. When we chased wekas away from our hut on the Gouland Downs they merely ran round one side of a tussock and appeared at the other side, with an air of innocence and unconcern, and immediately tried to get inside the hut again. They refused to take "no" for an answer. Threats had no effect on them whatever. It is this astonishing effrontery and an inexplicable fondness for human society that endear the weka to all who go up into New Zealand's wild places, and I have discussed the weka with shepherds, musterers, bush-fellers, and miners. These men, by the bird's thievish tricks, have lost tin pannikins, forks, spoons, and other possessions at times when such things could ill be spared: but they have assured me that, in spite of their friend's foibles and frailties, they would not like to be without its entertaining company, and that its presence at the camp or along the forest track is always welcomed. It now enjoys the law's protection, and happily is at least one member of New Zealand's strange avifauna that probably never will become extinct.

THE WEKA—A BIRD OF A SOCIAL DISPOSITION.

FINDING THE RIGHT MAN FOR THE JOB.

SOME "TESTS" USED BY AMERICAN BUSINESS MEN.

ONE of the most pressing problems confronting the modern business man, with his enormous works employing perhaps thousands of hands, is the question of maintaining a constant supply of boys and young men. Or, it would be more correct to say, of *efficient* boys and young men, for it is the weeding out of the good from the bad and indifferent that is the great problem. In America, where for some time past much attention has been given to this question, many employers have a series of tests which are applied to the majority of those answering advertisements for general office work. For those in this country such tests have all the attraction of novelty. At first sight they may appear rather trivial, and even unsuited for the purpose in view, but they have been found in practice to serve a really useful purpose, and thus may be considered as having justified themselves.

How the system works may be better understood, perhaps, from the following account of an interview between a Chicago employer and a boy applying for work.

"Take this," said the employer, handing him a typewritten page covered with numbers and followed by a few paragraphs. "Go through these numbers, cross off each figure 2, and make a circle around each figure 3. In the writing below I want you to cross out each letter 'E' that you find."

The boy went toward a table.

"Sit at that table," he was told. "Sit with your back to the window, so that the sun will shine over your shoulder."

The boy nodded, took a chair, sat down with his face toward the window and with the sun shining in his face.

This employer has a dozen other little tests like this to see if a man or boy is capable of following instructions.

"Why," he asks, "does a man or boy, when told to sit in a certain chair, or do a certain thing, do exactly as he chooses, and not as he is told? That is what we want to discover. If we find by means of such simple tests as these that a man is incapable of progress or of winning promotion, we know he has come to the wrong place and is trying for the wrong kind of work. The crossing off of the 2's, the circling of the 3's, the checking off the 'E's' in the reading matter, test his attention, power of observation, and quickness.

"The very simplicity of the tests is their strength. In grading, the boy's time is of prime importance. If a boy checks the figure 2's and draws circles round the 3's inside two minutes and gets eighty-five per cent. of them, I consider him well worth a trial. If he gets ninety per cent. in that time he is excellent. Below seventy per cent. it is scarcely worth wasting time upon him. It has been done correctly in forty-five seconds. In checking the 'E's' I consider eighty-five per cent. very good if it is done in two and a half minutes. Sixty-five per cent. is hopeless."

Such, very briefly described, are some of the little tests used in America to sort out those answering the "Situations Vacant" advertisements. Possibly the idea is already in practice here and there in this country, but is it not worthy of consideration and use by the bulk of British employers of boy labour?

BOYS' TEST.

1	~~2~~	(3)	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2
3	4	5	6	9	4	5	3	2	8	7
1	0	3	0	4	3	2	2	0	1	2
4	6	3	2	8	4	0	9	2	6	7
3	5	4	2	1	3	8	0	2	7	4
3	5	9	2	0	1	4	3	0	0	7
2	2	8	4	3	2	1	3	9	3	4
5	2	7	8	9	0	3	2	7	5	0
1	8	4	0	7	9	3	3	3	3	3
0	4	5	8	1	7	8	4	1	3	8
3	8	2	0	9	2	2	6	4	8	7
3	5	7	2	4	9	0	3	7	8	3
9	5	2	2	7	0	4	5	3	3	4
1	0	2	8	4	2	1				

Draw a line through each 2 and put a circle round each 3. Boys, in order to be considered "good," should complete the test in two minutes and check at least eighty-five per cent. of the 2's and 3's. It has been done perfectly in forty-five seconds

TEST YOURSELF AND OTHERS ON THIS.

THERE are one hundred letter E's in the first twenty-two lines of this article. If you were a young man applying for a situation in Chicago, your success or failure might depend upon how rapidly you could cross out one hundred E's in such a piece of reading matter. If you crossed out eighty-five per cent. of the E's in two and a half minutes you would be looked upon as promising. If you could not cross out sixty-five of them in two and a half minutes you would be looked upon as worthless. No applicant who checks fewer than sixty-five of the letters is considered available. Very few check every E, although it has been done in one and a half minutes.

AN OLD FRIEND IN A NEW GUISE.

THE *Ruhleben Camp Magazine*, the cover of whose August number is here reproduced, is the work of a few of those interned in the civilian prisoners' camp at Ruhleben, near Berlin. This particular cover, however, has a special interest for STRAND readers, as the drawing is a very clever adaptation of the magazine's familiar cover. This ingenious design, which is certainly most effective, is the work of Mr. A. Healey Hislop, and was carried out on the suggestion of a fellow-prisoner, Mr. Ernest W. Boot, a son of Mr. W. H. J. Boot, for many years Art Editor of THE STRAND, and a brother of Mr. J. Sydney Boot, the present Art Editor.

When forwarding the cover from Ruhleben, Mr. Hislop said: "The drawing is of 'Bond Street,' our shopping centre, and gives a very good impression of our most important street. To the right is the beginning of the shops, canteen, dry stores, tailor's, watchmaker's, boot and shoe shop. To the left is seen the end of Barrack 10, showing the steps up to the loft. In the middle is the rubbish cart, which is being drawn by a work gang, while in the background is the casino. The view itself is taken from the hot-water house."

The staff of the *Ruhleben Camp Magazine* have every reason to be proud of their production, for its contents, both letterpress and illustrations, are well varied and full of interest. May we offer our congratulations to our latest rival in the magazine world?

A REMARKABLE PLANT WIZARD.

BY JAMES ANDERSON.

IF it were possible to grow in our garden a fruit tree that would be so versatile in its products that we might go out and pick from it all the fruits, flowers, and even possibly vegetables, needed for our dinner, what a convenient and comfortable thing it would be!

But, on the surface at least, the idea of such a tree seems like a dream or wild fancy of a disordered imagination. Yet it is a fact that there is a plant-wizard living at Langhorne, Pennsylvania, named H. G. Walters, who claims that such a tree is possible. In proof he now has growing in the grounds of his interesting Plant Research Institute a tree almost as marvellous in its varied products as the imaginary one mentioned.

Remarkable as are the Professor's claims, one thing is certain—he is no Nature-faker, being well and favourably known in the world of science, and he is the author of a number of widely-read scientific books. By profession he is an instructor in philosophy, and for some time assisted Professor William James, of Harvard University, in psychical experimental work.

Of late years he has given much attention to what he calls "botanical philosophy," and he has at Langhorne the most novel and startling experiments in plant propagation always in process of trying out.

PROF. WALTERS AND ONE OF HIS TABLE D'HÔTE TREES IN THE MAKING — THE MARKS ON THE TREE SHOW WHERE DIFFERENT FRUITS AND FLOWERS HAVE BEEN GRAFTED.

For instance, the writer saw lilac buds, grafted in October, 1915, alive, healthy, and in bloom on a peach tree in May, 1916. Also rose slips which had been grafted on the tree at the same time. On the same tree were also grafted rhododendron, blackberry, and another species of rose, and all prospering beautifully. Can you imagine anything more startling or curious than the sight these utterly different plants and flowers, all growing on the same tree, presented?

Professor Walters's ultimate ideal is the growth of what he calls a "table d'hôte tree," on the one hand, and a "table d'hôte hedge" on the other. He says—and he seems quite serious about it—that, given time and favourable conditions, he will produce a hedge, and also a tree, capable of supplying dinner berries, roses, and other sorts of edible fruits, and what he has already to show, now growing in his grounds, in this direction certainly seems to lend strength to this statement.

A NOVEL CANNON.

BY S. LEONARD BASTIN.

A SOLDIER has been responsible for a singular little toy cannon. Although this is made out of such unusual materials as a bottle and a seidlitz powder, yet it fires with almost alarming violence. The first thing is to get a suitable bottle. This should be of clear glass, so that we can see what we are about when loading the novel gun with its charge. A pint or a quart bottle will do equally well for our purpose. It is important that the cork should be one which fits tightly.

Now pour sufficient water into the bottle, so that when it is lying on its side the liquid will just about come up to the neck without there being any overflow. Roughly this would mean that the bottle is about a third full. Next we take a seidlitz powder and, taking the powder out of the blue paper, shake this into the bottle, moving the water about until there is nothing left to dissolve.

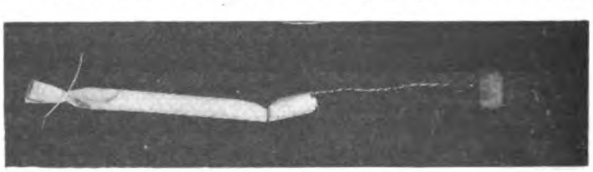


FIG. I.

Get a piece of paper and roll this round a penholder or pencil so that a little tube is formed. Screw up the

paper at one end, though do not do this too tightly. Take the powder from the white paper and tip this into the tube, finally screwing up the end which was open. On to the lower side of the cork of the bottle push in a pin. Tie a length of string on to one end of the paper tube; then fasten the other extremity of the string to the pin in the cork. You will then have an arrangement similar to that shown in Fig. 1.

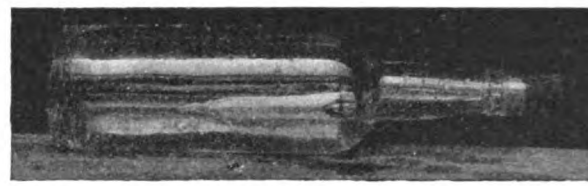


FIG. 2.

We must now let the tube down into the bottle while the latter is in an upright position. If the string has been adjusted properly the tube with its contents will be about half-way down the bottle. Push the cork in firmly, and then lay the bottle on its side, as shown in Fig. 2. It is well to avoid standing in front of the bottle at this stage, but otherwise the experiment is quite safe. After a while, which will be only a moment or so if thin paper has been used for the tube, the water will get into the powder. Then will commence a tremendous effervescence, as a result of which the cork is sent out with a very loud report. The experiment of the novel cannon is really most diverting, and the idea does credit to its inventor.

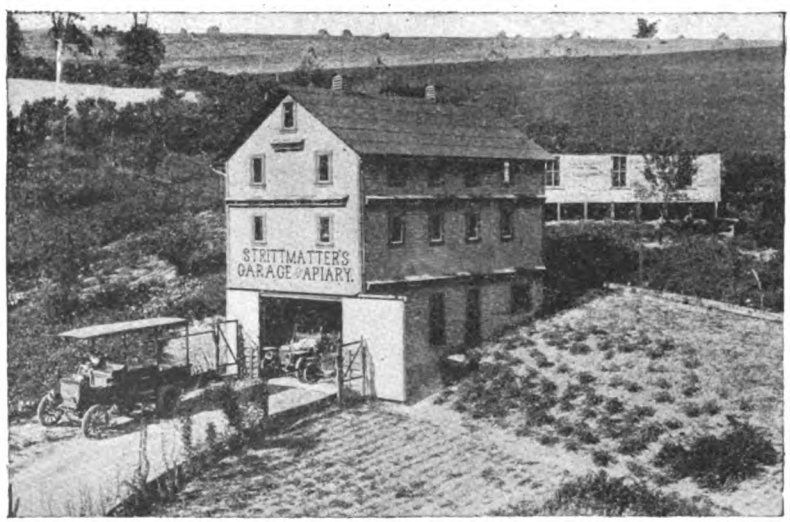
THE LARGEST BEE-HIVES IN THE WORLD.

MOST people are familiar with the appearance of the ordinary bee-hive, but who ever heard of huge bee-hives, or house apiaries, as large as ordinary houses three and four storeys high?

Near Ebensburg, Pennsylvania, there is a bee-farmer who has built four such houses, and they are believed to be not only the biggest but the only bee-hives of the kind in the world, and are naturally objects of the greatest curiosity. When he was planning these houses other bee-culturists whom he consulted laughed at him, and said his house apiaries would never prove a success.

similar houses, not together, but some miles apart. Each one of these wonderful bee-hives is large enough to accommodate from sixty to ninety colonies of bees. As every good colony has from ten thousand to fifty thousand workers, and usually some drones and always a queen, it is easy to imagine the number of bees which inhabit each bee-house. Each colony has its own entrance, and by an ingenious arrangement none of the bees can get into the building anywhere else unless a hive is opened or the door left ajar.

The huge bee-hives are situated so far apart because the enormous number of bees which inhabit them must have a sufficient honey-collecting territory. The farmer uses a speedy automobile to visit and care for his various huge apiaries. This is particularly necessary, as one of the greatest obstacles he has had to encounter is the securing of competent help, as most men and women are too much afraid of bees to handle them successfully.



ONE OF THE HUGE BEE-HIVES, OR HOUSE APIARIES—IT WILL BE SEEN THAT THE GROUND FLOOR IS USED AS A GARAGE.

But the bee-farmer's faith was not shaken, for he had begun bee-raising when a boy on his father's farm, and had an idea that he knew a few things about the habits of these industrious little insects. So he constructed one of these buildings as an experiment, and it quickly proved so successful that it was not long before he had built three more

CAN YOU FIND THE HIDDEN MESSAGE?

A MEMBER of a distinguished house-party—really one of a gang of expert jewel thieves—has stolen the family jewels of her hostess, and has deposited them in a place accessible to an outside accomplice. She knows detectives are in the house and that her correspondence will possibly be examined. She therefore introduces her instructions to her accomplice — eighteen words in all — into the following letter. The final sentence of the letter gives a clue to the lines on which the search for the eighteen words must be conducted. Can you decipher this message?

Highbrow Castle,
N.B.

Oh, Jane!

What in the world shall I do? Thanks to Vavasour, I'm in a perfect hole—right in, you may say. Yes, I'm up against the tallest tree a poor petticoated devil ever had to climb. But, by hook or by crook, I'll climb it. The only question is, will you help me? You remember that Bridge party I promised to give? Well, Vavasour has wired, "Can't come; detained W.O. till midnight." As if I believed him!

Oh, my darling Jane, will you ask that Futurist artist, Evelyn Piggott—with a "y" dear; be sure you remember the "y"; she goes mad if you call her *Eveline*—will you ask her to fill Vavasour's place? You know the woman I mean, the one who did such a daringly impudent sketch of Lady Di; gave her three square holes for nose, mouth, and eyes, and she as round as a melon, with a nose which looks like one new potato piled on the top of two others! Will you ask her, dear? If you do, and she comes, I will inscribe your name in my good books—no, in my *very best* book—for ever and a day. Explain the hobble I'm in, and tell her we don't lose precious minutes over elaborate dining. She'll get no entrées—soup, fish, and a joint. Time is too valuable when a good game of Bridge is waiting.

I hope to be back in town to-morrow, so run round after tea and relieve my mind by telling me she will come.

Yours anxiously and, in anticipation, gratefully,
MABEL.

The solution will be given next month.

ACROSTICS.

The Beginning of a New Series.

PRIZES to the value of twelve guineas are offered for solution of the six acrostics of the series now beginning.

Answers to Acrostics 19 *and* 20 *should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor,* THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C., and must arrive not later than by the first post on December* 12*th.*

The answer to each acrostic must be on a separate piece of paper, and each must be signed with the solver's pseudonym.

Two answers may be sent to every light.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 19.

At Christmas these are heard throughout the land;
We'll offer them to readers of THE STRAND.

1. In April comes, in August he must go,
2. In other words he must be this, you know.
3. Money made here should have a "saucy" scent.
4. A fish of constant use to birds is meant.
5. A worm, and this, will turn at last, they say.
6. Too many in the fire will hardly pay.
7. If it were so, how wealthy I should be.
8. Mistakes, alas! mistakes, are what we see.
9. The African in her finds dusky bride.
10. These dancing teas no more with us abide.
11. Affectionate at heart, 'tis not denied
That in his dress he takes but little pride.

QUAESTOR.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 20.

Ten of the twelve have passed away;
The final two are here to-day.

1. A land that suits the sleepy head.
2. A little weight, a quadruped.
3. Half empty—merely letters three.
4. A lake suggesting mystery.
5. To gun or proverb may apply.
6. Major or minor, wet or dry.
7. The creature with a colour rhymes.
8. A monarch, made of wood at times.

PAX.

ANSWER TO No. 17.

1. B	re	W
2. L	une	H
3. A	tergat	I
4. C	oun	T
5. K	nav	E
6. F	rithio	F
7. R	unne	R
8. I	m	J
9. A	rmeni	A
10. R	ilite	R
11. S	porade	S

NOTES.—Light 1. Hebrew. 3. Kingsley, *Andromeda.* 4. Count, reckon; count, the title. 5. The Knave of Hearts. 6. Nansen. 7. Bean, scarlet runner. 8. Mimic, take off. 9. *Men* in *aria.* 10. Triliteral. 11. Thera, the name of one of the Sporades, is buried in "another answer."

ANSWER TO No. 18.

1. S	ha	C
2. C	icer	O
3. A	rmad	A
4. P	uppe	T
5. E	ligiu	S

NOTES.—Light 1. Cormorant, and tobacco. 2. *Julius Cæsar,* i., 2. Light 5. Patron saint of jewellers.

"LONGFELLOW STRETCHED HIMSELF AGAIN."

The Three Faithful Companions.

A FAIRY LEGEND.

Retold by **A. H. GREENWOOD.**

Illustrated by **W. Heath Robinson.**

THERE was once a king who was very old and had only one son. One day he called the Prince and said, "My dear son, before I die I would gladly behold my future daughter, your wife. Take to yourself, therefore, a wife."

The Prince answered, "Gladly would I fulfil your wish, my father, but I have as yet no bride. I do not know one."

The King thrust his hand into his pocket and drew from it a golden key, which he gave to his son, saying:—

"Go up into the highest room in the tower, and when you are there cast your eyes round you and tell me which of the brides whom you will see there pleases you the most."

When the Prince reached the highest room but one he saw in the ceiling a small iron door like a lid, which was locked; but he unlocked it with the golden key, lifted it up, and went through it.

There was a large round room, the roof of which was as blue as the sky on a clear winter's night, and silver stars glittered upon it. The floor was covered with a

green silken carpet, and the room had twelve high windows in golden framework. In each window was painted, in the loveliest colours, a beautiful lady, with a royal crown upon her head, but each one more beautiful than the other, so that the Prince was quite dazzled. As he was gazing on them in astonishment, not knowing which to choose, the lovely figures began to move like living things, and looked towards him and smiled on him, as if they wished to speak.

Then the Prince saw that one of the windows was concealed by a white curtain, which he drew aside in order to see what was behind it.

There stood a maiden dressed in white, with a silver girdle round her waist and a crown of pearls upon her head. She was the loveliest of all, but sad and pale, as if she had risen from the grave. The Prince stood gazing long upon the figure, seeming like one in a dream, and whilst he was thus looking at her his heart was sorely grieved, and he said, "She and no other shall be my choice." As soon as he had spoken the lady bent her head, and a flush overspread her cheeks. At the same moment all the other figures vanished.

After the Prince had left the tower and returned to the King, he told his father all that he had seen and which of the ladies he had chosen. Then the old King was filled with sorrow, and said:—

"You have chosen ill, my son, and done wrong in uncovering what was concealed. You will meet with great dangers, because of the words which you have spoken. This maiden is in the power of a wicked enchanter, imprisoned within an iron castle, and none of those who have gone to set her free have ever returned again to their homes."

The Prince now rode out in search of the iron castle, that he might obtain his bride. When he had gone a long way and was wandering in a wood, he heard a voice behind him shout:—

"Halloa, there! Stop!"

The Prince turned round and saw a very tall man hastening towards him.

"Wait and take me with you," said the voice. "If you take me into your service, you will never have cause to repent it."

"Who are you?" said the Prince. "And what can you do?"

"My name is Longfellow, and I can stretch out my limbs to a great length. Do you see the bird's nest at the top of that high fir-tree? I can reach it down for you without having to climb the tree."

So saying, he began to stretch himself out, and his body rapidly became longer and longer, till he was as high as the tree itself. Then he reached forth to take the nest, and when he had taken it his body shrank again, and he handed the nest to the Prince.

"You understand your business well," said the Prince. "But what is the use of birds' nests to me, if you cannot help me out of the forest?"

"That is easy enough," replied Longfellow, and he stretched himself again, until he was three times as high as the tallest tree in the forest. He then looked round and, pointing in a certain direction, said, "On that side is the nearest road out of the wood."

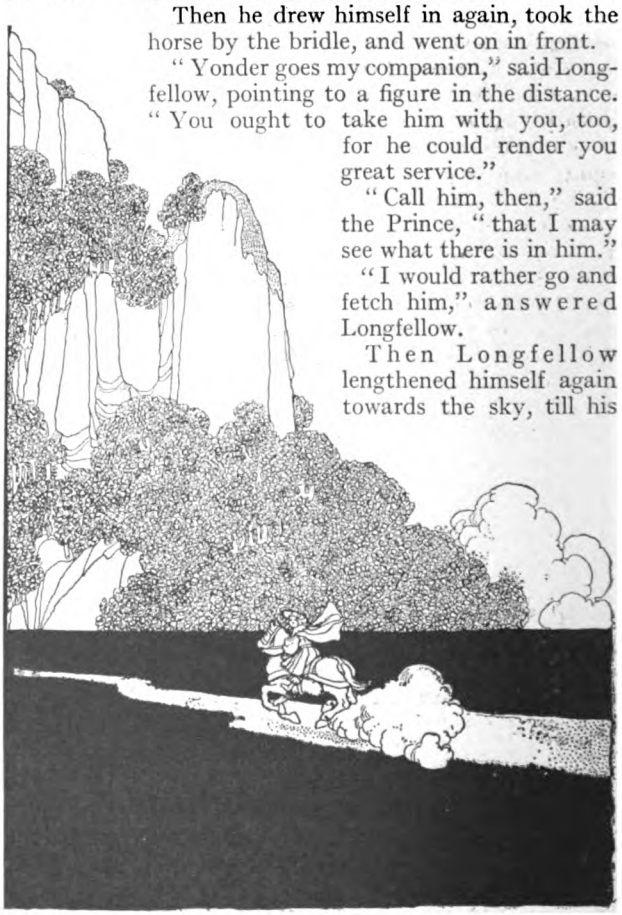
Then he drew himself in again, took the horse by the bridle, and went on in front.

"Yonder goes my companion," said Longfellow, pointing to a figure in the distance. "You ought to take him with you, too, for he could render you great service."

"Call him, then," said the Prince, "that I may see what there is in him."

"I would rather go and fetch him," answered Longfellow.

Then Longfellow lengthened himself again towards the sky, till his



"RIDE WITH ALL SPEED INTO THE

head reached the clouds, made one or two steps, seized his comrade by the arm, and placed him before the Prince. He was a broad, muscular fellow.

"Who are you?" asked the Prince. "And what can you do?"

"Master, I am called Broadfellow, and I can swell myself out to a great breadth."

"Let me see," said the Prince, "what you can do."

"Ride with all speed into the forest," returned Broadfellow, and immediately began to swell himself out.

The Prince was puzzled to know why he should ride away so quickly, but when he saw Longfellow running with all his might towards the forest, he spurred on his horse and hurried after him. And lucky it was for him that he did so, or Broadfellow would soon have crushed him and his horse to death, for he increased so rapidly on all sides that the whole place was soon filled with him. Then he stopped swelling himself, and blew out the air with such tremendous force that he made the forest shake, and appeared again as before.

"You have driven me into a sad plight," said the Prince, "but such a fellow as you are is not to be found every day, so come along with me."

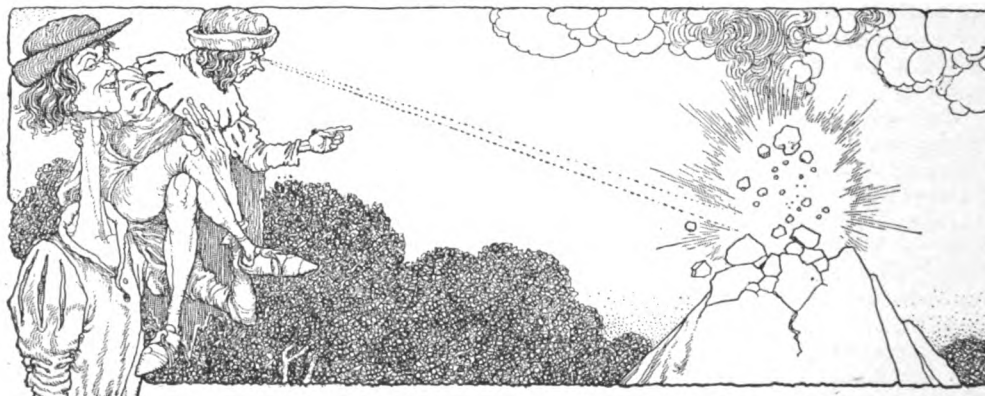
As they proceeded on their way they met a man with his eyes bandaged.

"This is our other comrade," said Longfellow. "You ought to take him into your service, for certainly he will be useful to you."

"Who are you?" demanded the Prince. "And why are your eyes bound in that fashion? Surely you cannot see your way?"

"On the contrary, sir," replied he, "it is just because I see too clearly that I have my eyes bound, for with them bound I can see as well as you can with yours free. If I take off the bandage my sight pierces through the thickest substance, and if I look rather hard at anything it either takes fire or flies into a thousand pieces. For this reason I am called Keeneye."

FOREST,' SAID BROADFELLOW, AND IMMEDIATELY BEGAN TO SWELL HIMSELF OUT."



"PRESENTLY THE HARD ROCKS BEGAN TO CRACKLE."

He then turned himself towards some rocks that were opposite to them, removed the bandage, and fixed his fiery eyes steadily upon them. Presently the hard rocks began to crackle, the pieces flew in all directions, and in a few moments nothing was left of the rocks but a heap of sand. Then they saw in the midst of the sand something shining like fire. Keeneye fetched it and presented it to the Prince, who, on beholding it, found that it was a lump of pure gold.

"Truly, you are a valuable fellow," said the Prince. "He would be a fool who would not make use of your services. But since you have such an excellent eye, look and tell me how far we are from the iron castle, and what is going on within it at this moment."

"If you rode alone, master," answered Keeneye, "you would not arrive there in a year; but with our help you will be there before the day is over. They are at this moment preparing the evening meal for us."

"And what is my bride doing?" asked the Prince.

"She is sitting alone
In the gloomy tower,
Cruelly bound
By magic power."

"Then," said the Prince, "let him who is my friend help me to set her free."

And they all promised to help him. So they journeyed on, and shortly afterwards they crossed the iron bridge that led to the old castle gate. As soon as they had entered the bridge raised itself, the gates closed, and they stood prisoners within the iron castle. Everything was prepared for them, and when they entered the castle hall they saw by the twilight many people in rich attire, both men and women, but not one of them moved. They were all turned to stone.

After wandering through many apartments the Prince and his companions came at length to the banquet hall. It was brilliantly lighted, and in the middle stood a table covered with a profusion of rich viands, and laid for four persons. Finding that no one appeared, they sat down and began to eat and drink till they were satisfied. When they had finished their meal they looked about to see if they could find some place where they might sleep. Suddenly the door flew open, and the enchanter walked into the room. He was an old man, dressed in a long black robe, and bowed down by years. His head was bald, but his grey beard flowed down to his knees, and instead of a girdle three iron rings surrounded his body. He led by the hand a most lovely Princess, clothed in white. Around her waist she wore a silver girdle, and upon her head a crown of pearls; but she was pale and sad, as if she had risen from the grave. The Prince knew her again in a moment, and sprang up and went towards her, but the enchanter addressed him in these words:—

"I know why you have come hither; your intention is to bear away this Princess. Good. Be it so. It is permitted you to claim her after you have guarded her for three nights together without allowing her to escape. If you fail, you and your three attendants shall

be turned into stone, like all those who have made the attempt before you."

He then led the Princess to a seat and withdrew.

The Prince could not turn away his eyes from her, she was so very lovely. He began to speak to her and to ask her many things; but she did not answer, nor did she even smile or look upon him, but remained like a marble statue. He sat down by her side and resolved not to sleep during the whole of the night, so that she might not escape.

For greater safety Longfellow lengthened himself to the fullest extent, and lay all round the room; Broadfellow placed himself in the doorway, swelled out his body, and stopped the way so completely that even a mouse could not get through; and Keeneye stood in the middle of the room like a pillar, so as to keep watch. In a little while, however, all three, growing weary, fell asleep, and slept the whole night as soundly as if they had been at the bottom of the ocean.

When the morning light began to dawn the Prince awoke first, and when he saw that the Princess had disappeared he seemed as though he had been struck with a knife. He lost no time in arousing the three companions, and asked what was to be done.

"Do not be in the least troubled, master," said Keeneye, looking out of the window, "for I see her already. A hundred miles from this castle is a forest. In the midst of that forest stands an oak; upon that oak is an acorn, and that acorn is the Princess. Longfellow shall take me on his shoulders, and we will soon get her back again."

So he got upon Longfellow's shoulders, who stretched himself out and left the castle. Each step he took measured ten miles. Keeneye showed him the way, and in less time than it takes to go round a cottage they were back again. Longfellow gave the acorn to the Prince, and said:—

"Let it fall upon the ground."

The Prince did as he was told, and at the same moment the beautiful Princess stood before him.

As the sun began to show itself above the hills the door flew open with a loud crash, and the magician entered with a fiendish laugh; but as soon as he saw the Princess there he became gloomy. As he was muttering something between his teeth, one of the three rings that were round his waist snapped asunder and fell to the ground. He then took the Princess by the hand and led her away.

The next day the Prince, having nothing to do, wandered through the castle and all round it to see everything that was most remarkable there. On all sides it seemed as if life had stopped short at one blow.

At morning, noon, and evening the Prince and his companions found a sumptuous meal ready for them. An unseen power served up the viands and poured the wine into their glasses, so that they had nothing to do but to eat and drink.

Scarcely was the evening meal over before the door opened and the magician again appeared, leading the Princess who was to be guarded a second night by the Prince. Now, although they had firmly made up their minds to withstand the influence of sleep on this night, it was of no use, for they soon fell into a sound slumber. And when at early dawn the Prince awoke and found the Princess gone again, he sprang up, and seizing Keeneye by the shoulder, cried, "Ho, there! Bestir yourself, ye of the Keeneye. Do you know where the lady has fled?"

Keeneye rubbed his eyes a little while, then looked round him and said, "I already see her. Two hundred miles from here stands a hill. Within that hill is a rock. Within that rock is a precious stone, and that precious stone is the Princess. If Longfellow will carry me on his shoulders, we will soon recover her."

Longfellow then took his comrade on his shoulder, lengthened himself out, and departed from the castle. Each step he took measured twenty miles. When they arrived within sight of the hill, Keeneye fixed his fiery eye upon it, and immediately it began to crumble, and the rock became a burning mass in the midst of which the precious stone was seen to glitter. They took it up and brought it to the Prince, and as soon as he had thrown it on the ground the Princess stood again before him. Then, when the magician came and saw her there, his eyes flashed with anger, and before he had time to speak a second ring snapped asunder and fell from his body. The magician growled with rage and led the Princess away.

This day passed like the one before it. After the evening meal the magician brought in the Princess again, and looking with a keen glance into the Prince's eyes said, with a fiendish chuckle, "It will now be seen which is the mightier of us two—whether you or I will gain the victory."

Whereupon he left the room, and all three, being determined not to sleep that night, resolved not even to sit down, but in spite of their efforts, one after the other yielded to the power of sleep even while walking. And the Princess escaped a third time.

In the morning the Prince was the first again to discover the disappearance of the Princess. He ran to his keen-eyed companion and, shaking him violently, cried :—

" Ho, Keeneye ! Get up and tell me where the Princess is."

Keeneye stood looking for a long time.

" I see her at last," he said. " She is a long way off, master—a very long way off. Three hundred miles from here is the Black Sea. In the middle of the sea, lying at the bottom, is a mussel ; in the middle of that mussel is a golden ring. That ring is the Princess. Do not be troubled, master, for we shall get her yet ; but we shall have to take Broadfellow with us this time, for we shall want him."

Longfellow then, taking Keeneye on one shoulder and Broadfellow on the other, started on his way. Each step he took measured thirty miles.

When they came to the Black Sea, Keeneye showed his companion what part of the sea the mussel was to be found in. Longfellow stretched out his hand as far as he was able but could not reach the bottom.

" Stop, comrades, stop a little ! " exclaimed Broadfellow, " and let me help you."

When he had spoken these words he began swelling himself as far as he could. He then laid himself down on the shore and began to drink. As he drank the water fell, until at length it was low enough to allow Longfellow to reach the bottom with ease, and to bring up the ring.

Meanwhile, in the castle the Prince was growing very uneasy. The dawn was already breaking, and his attendants were not yet back. In a moment the door flew open and the magician appeared in the doorway. When he saw that the Princess was not there a grin of malicious delight spread over his face, but before he could utter a word the window was smashed into a thousand pieces, the ring fell on the ground, and, behold ! the Princess stood before them. For Keeneye, when he saw what was going on in the castle, told Longfellow what great danger his master stood in. Longfellow then made one rapid step and, stretching out his arm, threw the ring through the window into the room. The magician roared with anger, so that the castle trembled. In an instant a third ring snapped asunder and fell to the ground, and at the same time the magician was transformed into a raven, and flew away through the broken window.

Then the beautiful Princess began to speak, and as she thanked the Prince for her freedom a soft blush overspread her cheeks.

Everything in all parts of the castle was filled with life. Each of the petrified figures finished what he was about to do before the words of the magician struck him into stone.

The Prince now began to think of returning to his father's palace with his bride and his faithful companions. They all started out, and in due time arrived.

The old King wept for joy at the good fortune of his son, and three weeks later the happy wedding took place.

When it was over the comrades told the Prince that they wished to go again into the wide world to seek employment.

The Prince tried to persuade them to stay.

" I will give you whatever you wish till you die, and you will have no need to work."

But they were not content with such an idle life, so they went away, and are still wandering about in some part of the world.

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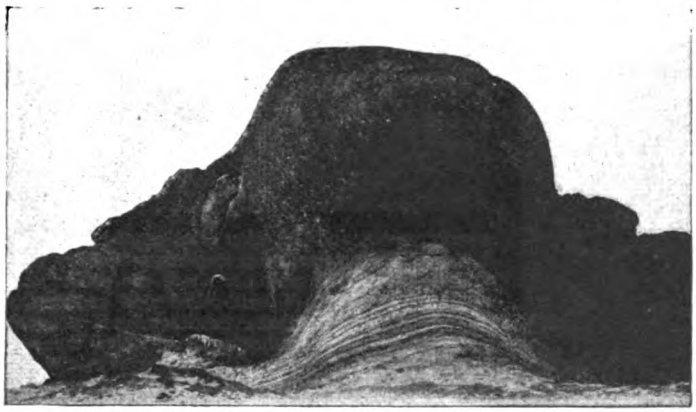
CURIOSITIES.

[We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.]



LOOKING UP AT THE SPHINX.

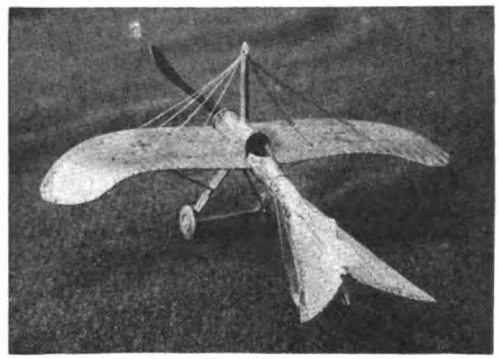
IMAGINE yourself lying flat on your back between the paws of the great Sphinx of Egypt, looking upward at its battered face. Such is the angle from which this photograph was taken. To fully appreciate the point of view of the camera, the picture should be held horizontally above one's head. The Arab standing on a projection near the ear helps to give one an idea of the relative size of the great stone monster. Were it not for the mutilated nose, the face would still be a good likeness of whoever it was intended to represent.—Mr. F. C. Bryant, 24, Manhattan Avenue, New York City, U.S.A.

LOOKING DOWN ON A PICNIC.

AS a contrast to the above photograph of the Sphinx seen from an unusual angle, here is a picture of a picnic party taken from a tree—a genuine bird's-eye view, in fact. This curious view was sent to us by Miss Kathryn Bradshaw, 3,065, Albany Road, Victoria, British Columbia.

NOVEL MODEL OF A TAUBE.

THE photograph reproduced below shows a model of a Taube aeroplane made by a British private while in the trenches "somewhere in France." Its construction is particularly interesting, as it is made entirely from "war material" available in the trenches. The fusilage is made from a German rifle cartridge, while the wings and tail are from a portion of a French ·75 shell-case. The propeller is made from a piece of flattened telegraph wire, and the prop is formed from a handle of a messtin. The landing wheels are from



French cartridge caps. The proportions are said to be particularly good. The model is the work of Private H. Allison, of the 2nd Leicesters.—Mr. A. E. Ball, 165, Mere Road, Leicester.

HOW MANY ANCESTORS HAVE YOU GOT?

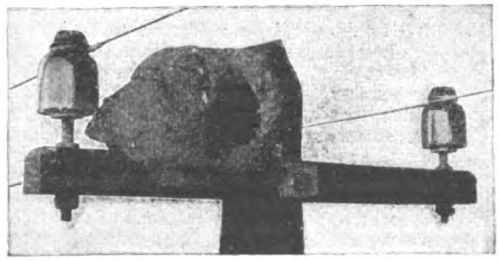
YOU need not be a nobleman to be able to boast a large number of ancestors. As a matter of fact, each of us owns exactly the same number as anyone else. But here is a question that will puzzle your friends: "How many ancestors have you got, in direct lineal descent, *twenty generations back?*" In the first generation you have two (your father and mother); in the second generation, you have four (two grandfathers and two grandmothers); in the third, you have eight; in the fourth, sixteen; and so on. For the twentieth generation it is surprising how far your friends' guesses will go wide of the mark. The figure, which, of course, is exactly the same for every one of us, is 1,048,576. Putting the number of generations in each century at three — a conservative estimate — this means that there existed about the years 1230-1250 *one million forty-eight thousand five hundred and seventy-six* people whose blood now flows in your veins.—Mr. Robert L. Cru, 5, Chancery Lane, London, W.C.

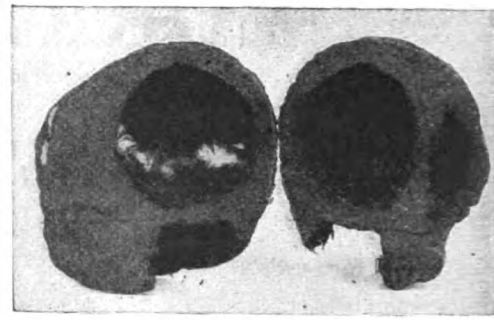
A CHINESE DEITY ON THE ROOF.

IN a certain village of Japan there stands on the roof of *every* house a tile statue of *Shoki* in Chinese costume, and with a sword in hand, guarding the occupants of the house. It is believed that as long as the statue stands on the roof the occupants are quite safe from thieves, plagues, or any other misfortunes.—Mr. Kiyoshi Sakamoto, Tokiwa-cho, Yamada, Mie-ken, Japan.

THE OVEN BIRD'S REMARKABLE NEST.

I AM sending you two photographs I have taken of the curious and solidly-constructed nest of the oven bird of South America. The first is of the nest built on the cross-arm of a telegraph-pole, the favourite building-place of these birds. The other shows two sections of the nest. In one of them the entrance is





clearly visible, and the other gives a good idea of the interior, which is lined with feathers, bits of dry grass, and so forth. The nests are about one cubic foot in size, and are made of hard-caked mud and clay, so strongly put together that even after miles of telegraph-poles have been overthrown in a storm the nests have been found intact. They are wonderfully constructed—in fact, quite a piece of architecture. One can see that the cleverly-arranged entrance makes the interior wind and rain proof.—Mr. C. Hamilton Best, Calle Peral 555, Alta Cordoba, Argentine Republic.

CAN YOU READ THIS?

OO, IOO! DOUOO?
NOIDOOOO, BUTIDOOO 240½d.
UOOTOOO.

The above puzzle contains an injunction, an assertion, a question and its answer, and a statement, and it only needs a little patient study for its meaning to become clear.

[*The solution will be given next month.*]

Bridge Problem.

BY W. H. WHITFELD.

Hearts—Ace, queen, 5, 4.
Clubs—Knave, 7, 4.
Diamonds—None.
Spades—Ace, king, 10, 3.

Hearts—King, 8, 7.
Clubs—9, 8, 3.
Diamonds—Queen.
Spades—Knave, 9, 7, 6.

B
Y Z
A

Hearts—Knave, 10, 6.
Clubs—Queen, 10, 6, 5, 2.
Diamonds—None.
Spades—Queen, 8, 2.

Hearts—9, 3, 2.
Clubs—Ace, king.
Diamonds—Knave, 10, 9, 3.
Spades—5, 4.

Clubs are trumps. A has the lead. A B are to win seven out of the eleven tricks, against any possible defence.

(*Solution will be published next month.*)

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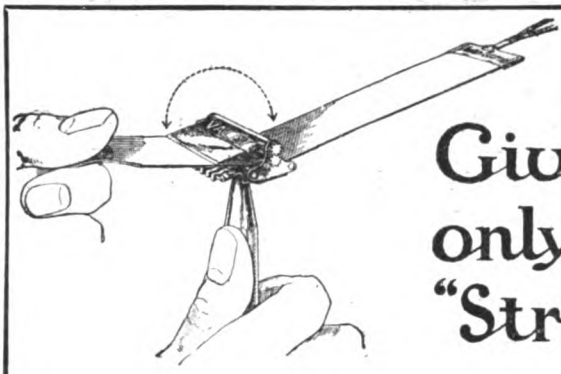

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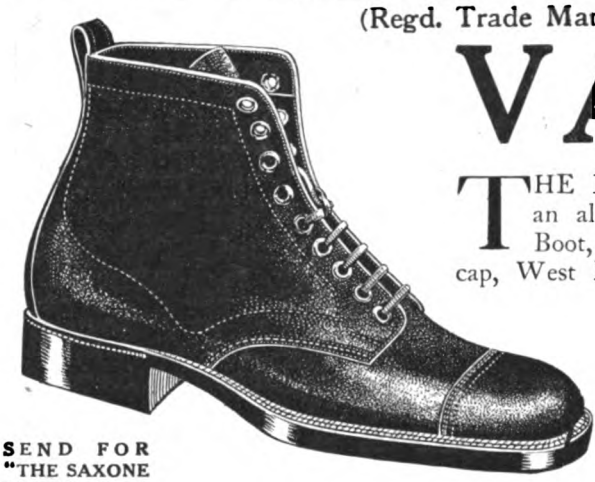

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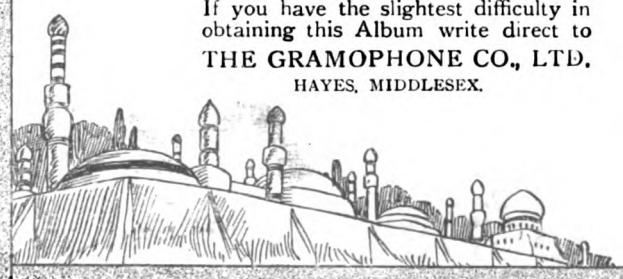

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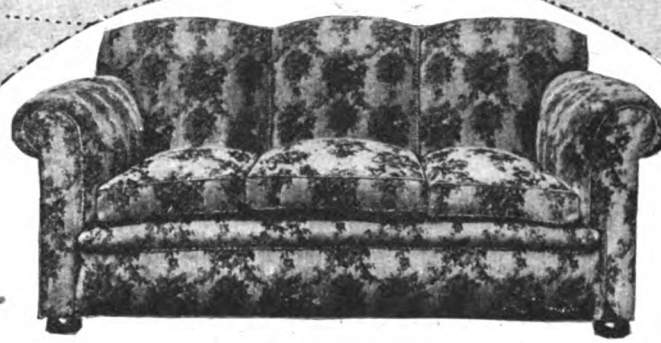

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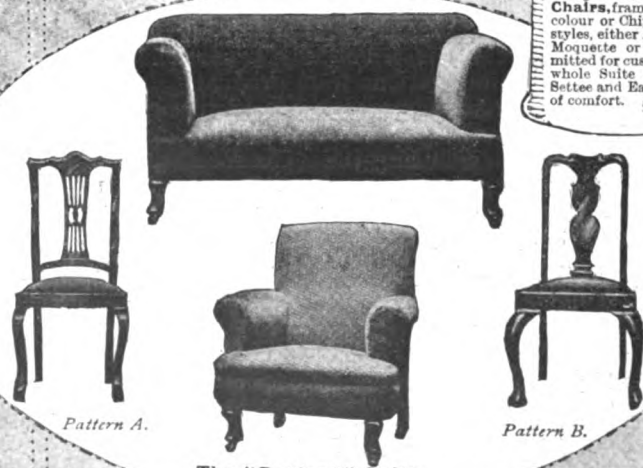
The complete Suite, comprising **Settee,** one adjustable drop end, **Pair of Divan Easy Chairs, Four Small Easy Chairs,** frames polished dark mahogany colour or Chippendale. (Choice of two styles, either A or B pattern.) Covering, Moquette or Tapestry, patterns submitted for customers' own selection. The whole Suite soundly upholstered, the Settee and Easy Chairs being the acme of comfort. **£18 :: 17 :: 6**



Pattern A. *Pattern B.*

The "Retford" Suite.

GLOBE Furnishing Co. (Dept. E), Pembroke Place, **LIVERPOOL.**

(J. R. GRANT, Proprietor).

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The "Queen Anne" Sideboard.

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in Mahogany, with quartered panels, antique brass fittings, British Bevelled Mirror.

4ft. 6in. size, **£11 :: 10 :: 0**

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The "Monmouth" Suite

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—for of course they get the first attention—don't forget to give the teeth their usual antiseptic cleaning with

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Tooth Powder

It is just as necessary on Christmas day as on any other day.

Your Chemist sells it—6d., 1/- and 1/6 tins.
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Every time the chain goes round, each link is automatically oiled; so, too, are the driving bearings. The Gear-Case—an integral part of the machine, not an afterthought — excludes all dust, dirt, and damp; the little oil-bath supplies the necessary lubrication.

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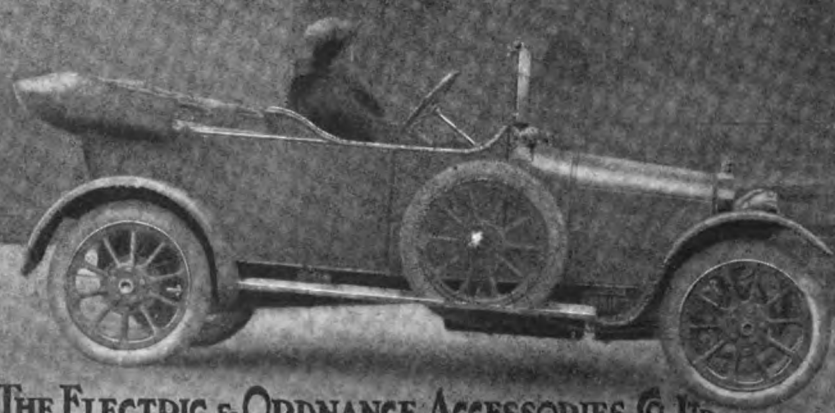

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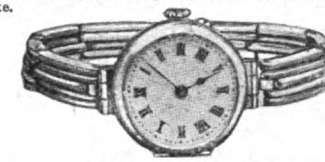

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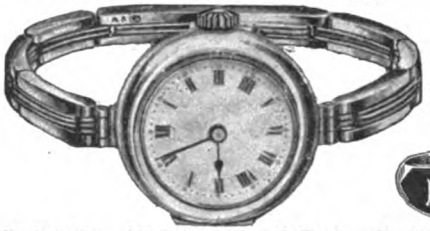

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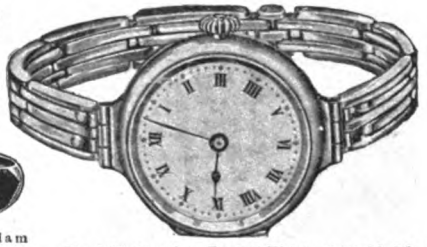

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For Empty Winter Evenings introduce a

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You play as you pay—and Seven Days' Free Trial Guarantees your satisfaction.

IN the vacant hours from dinner to bedtime—it's then that the young people feel the boredom of doing nothing—then's the time to bring out the "Riley," and in a trice you've got them so fascinated they'll never think of looking outdoors for amusement.

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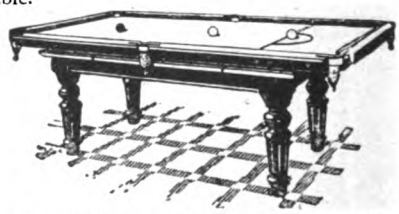

Riley Miniature Billiard Table shown resting on ordinary Table.

Riley's no-trouble way to pay.

8/6 down

Send 8/6 postal order to us this evening, and within a few days the **£5 15s. 0d.** size RILEY MINIATURE TABLE (the most popular size) will be dispatched, carriage paid (no charge for packages), to any address in the United Kingdom within a mile of Railway Station. The remainder you pay in fourteen monthly instalments of **8s. 6d.**

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,, 5ft. 4in. by 2ft. 10in. ...	**4**	**15**	**0**		**7/-**
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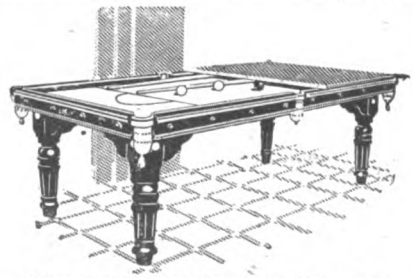
RILEY'S MINIATURE BILLIARD TABLE

fits securely on any dining table. Solid mahogany, French polished, with best slate bed, low frost-proof cushions, ivory or crystalate balls, and all accessories included.



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Handsome as a dining table and perfect as a Billiard Table. Solid oak or mahogany; low frost-proof rubber cushions; best slate bed; patent automatic raising and lowering action. Dining-table top of highly polished oak or mahogany.

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Coal Tar
SOAP
is now known as the
Soldiers' Soap.

It
Soothes, Protects, Heals.

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I am sending you an extract from my son's letter (he is on active service, somewhere in France). I wrote asking if I should send him vermin powder, and his reply is: "DON'T SEND ANY VERMIN POWDER, THANKS; I USE WRIGHT'S COAL TAR SOAP, THAT'S AS EFFECTIVE AND MUCH MORE PLEASANT."

It seems to me a unique and spontaneous tribute to your soap.

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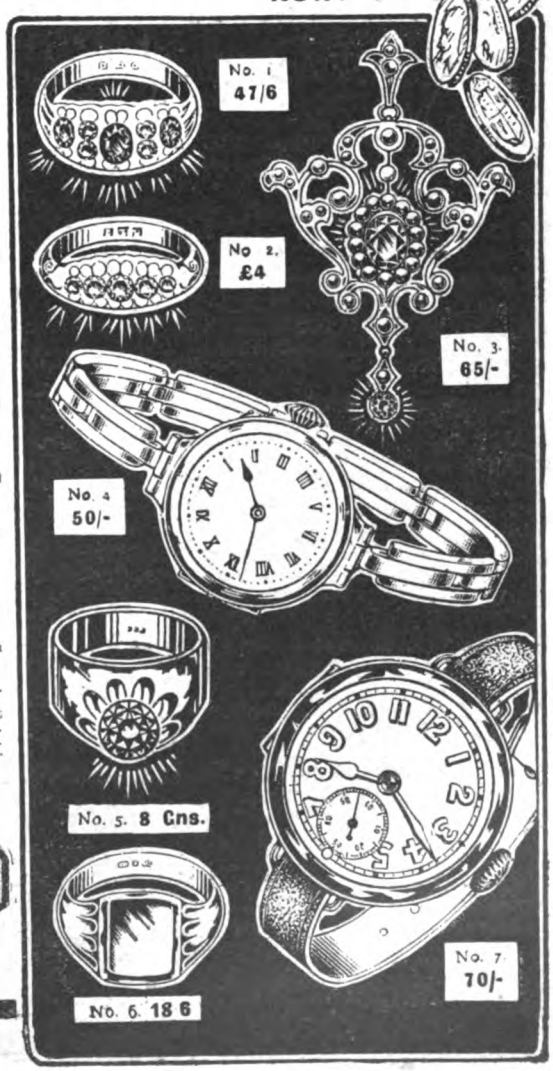

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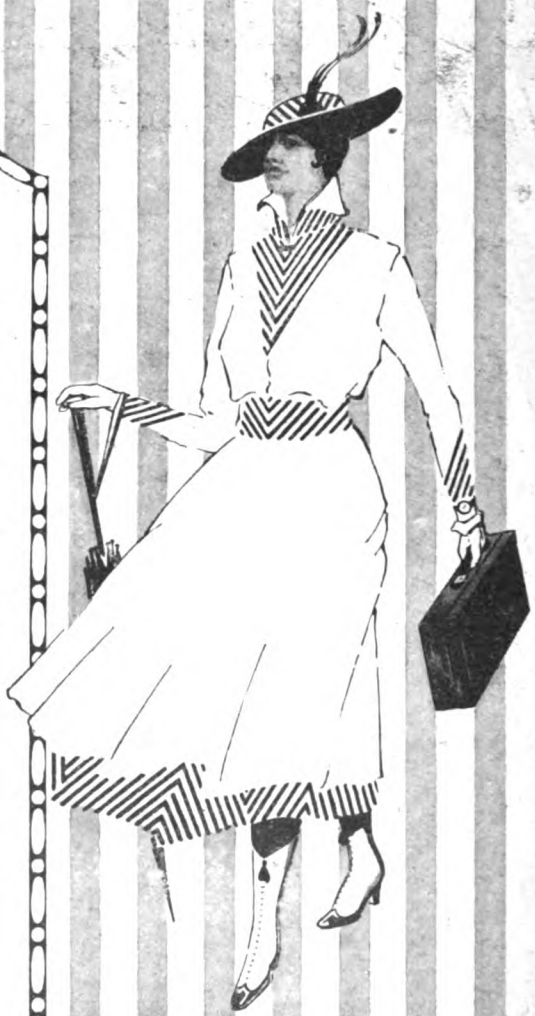

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Tin of 100	3/8
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P. 649

Pears' Annual

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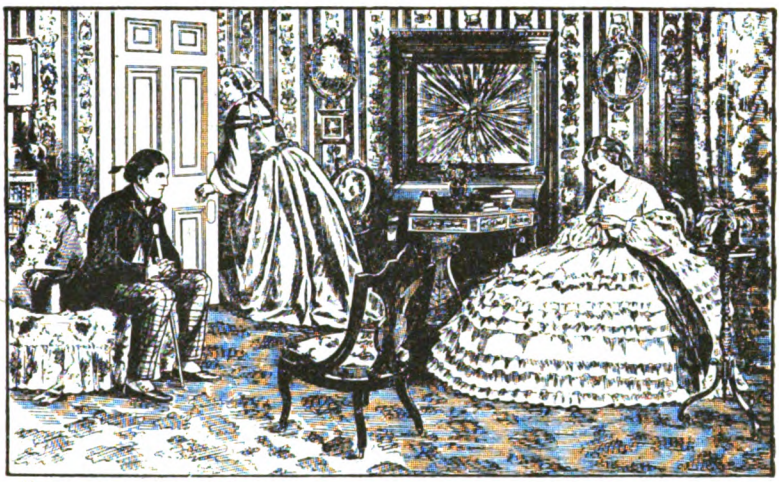

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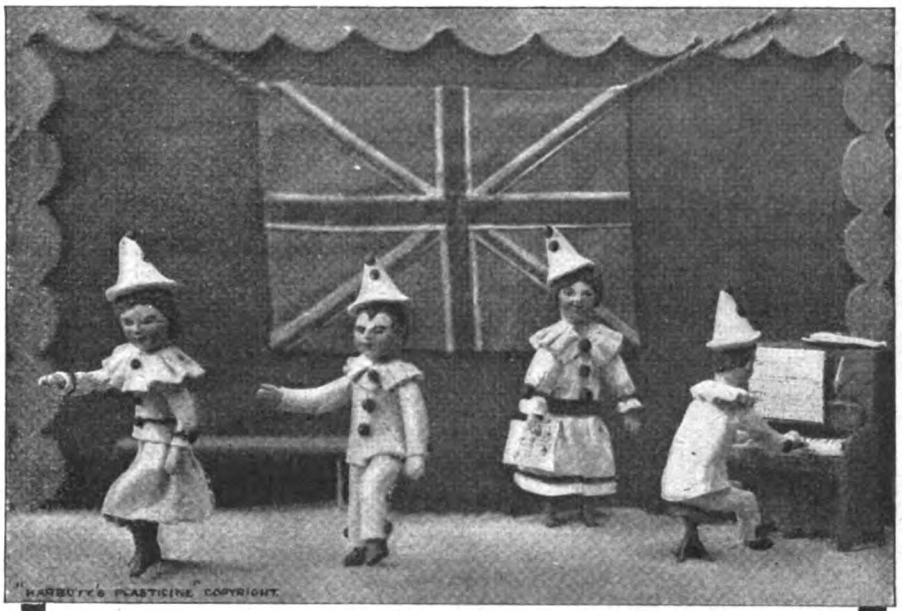

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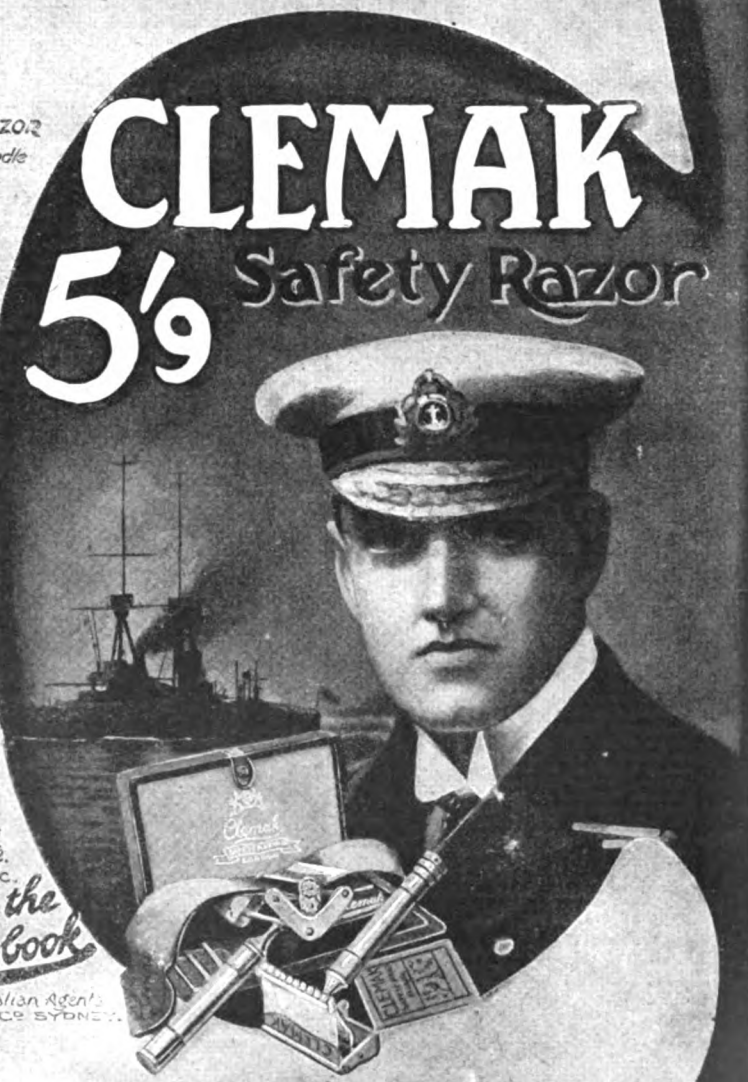

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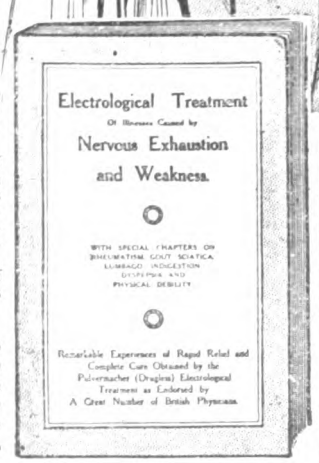

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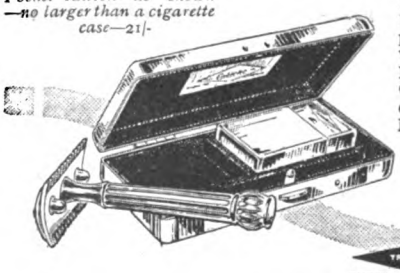

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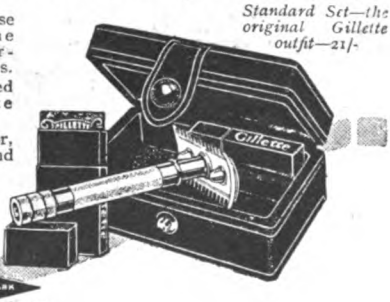

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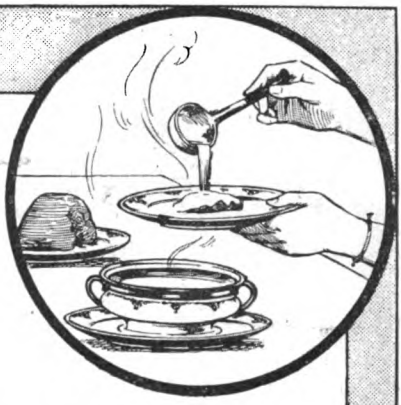

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Yet it is just as absurd to spend money on pens made in foreign factories when you can get the British Onoto.

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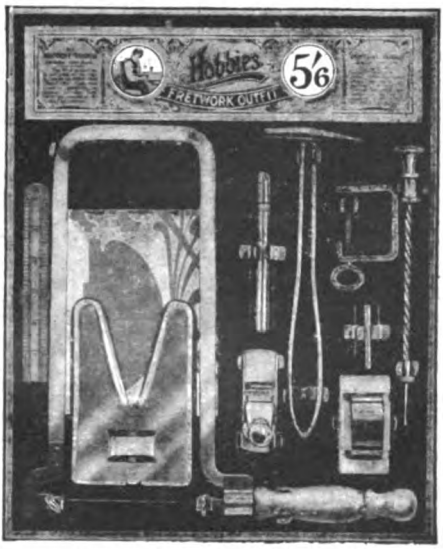

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Tobacconists to the Royal Family.
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Like a big hand on a long arm, the RONUK HOME POLISHER dry-scrubs, dusts, cleans and polishes Floors, Skirtings, Doors, Panellings, Linoleum, &c. It reaches everywhere from anywhere, is very light in weight and easy to use. Never requires washing or boiling. Price 5/6 complete. Of leading Grocers, Ironmongers, and Stores. For use with the Famous RONUK Sanitary POLISH. If any difficulty, write to RONUK, LTD. (Dept. No. 17), Portslade, Brighton.

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Fed from birth on the 'Allenburys' Foods.

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☞ *Write for a large sized* **Free Sample** *of Food stating age of child and whether Weaned or Unweaned. Also for* **free book "Infant Feeding and Management," 64** *pages of valuable information for every mother.*

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In tins at 1/6 and 3/- each.

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Simplest, Safest, and Best.
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Automatic Adjustable Back.

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The "BURLINGTON."

An Ideal Easy Chair that can be instantly changed into a semi or full length couch.

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N.119

26/6

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Let the pure wool of Wolsey Underwear safeguard your health during the chill and dreary days—you will find it indeed a sound investment.

Wolsey, especially, because then you can be sure of clean, pure wool, of perfect fit and comfort, and of long-enduring service. You can be sure also that what you get is genuinely British!

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I was born in 1852, and, just as my photograph shows, I now have a full growth of hair. Yet, thirty years ago, I found scurf upon my scalp and my hair began to fall away until after a while I was classed as a "bald-head."

Call it vanity if you will, it was displeasing to me to remain bald. Furthermore, I believe it is our birthright to have plenty of hair upon our heads.

SEEKING A HAIR GROWTH.

It is scarcely necessary for me to state that, in the hope of growing new hair, I had experimented with one thing and another—the usual array of lotions, pomades, shampoos, etc., without getting any benefit. At that age I looked older than I do now. Later, when I became a trader in the Indian territory of U.S.A., some of the Cherokees jocosely called me "The White brother without a scalp lock."

AMERICAN INDIANS ARE NEVER BALD.

I never saw a bald Cherokee Indian. Both braves and squaws almost invariably use tobacco, eat irregularly, frequently wear tight bands around their heads, and do other things which are commonly ascribed as causes of baldness. Yet they all possess beautiful hair. What, then, is their secret? Being on the spot—most of the time at Tahlequah—and upon very friendly terms, it was easy for me to gain information from usually taciturn Cherokees. I learned exactly how American Indians grow long, luxuriant hair, avoiding baldness and eliminating scurf or dandruff.

MY HAIR GREW AGAIN.

Then I applied these secrets to myself and my hair began to grow. There was no messing or trouble about it. The new hairs emanated from my scalp as profusely as grass grows on a properly kept lawn. I have had a plentitude of hair ever since.

Numerous friends of mine in Philadelphia and elsewhere asked me what had performed such a miracle, and I gave them the Indian elixir. Their hair soon grew over bald spots. Scurf disappeared wherever it existed—and it never returned. That these persons were amazed and delighted is stating the fact mildly.

The hair that grows is strong and silk-like. It has beautiful lustre and imparts the appearance of health and vigour.

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On account of business matters I have come to London, where I expect to remain a brief period before returning to America. It will be a pleasure for me to send, post free, a package of what I now term Brittain's Indian Hair Elixir to any person who writes a request for it, and who encloses sixpence in stamps (or a P.O.) to pay a share of advertising and mailing expenses. Mention Mrs., Mr., Miss, Rev., etc., and sign name plainly. Kindly address your letter to J. Hart Brittain, 2, Percy Street (201.A.), London, W. After using the testing package, when you observe that your hair is beginning to grow—even if you have been bald for years—you may obtain a further supply from me at a modicum.

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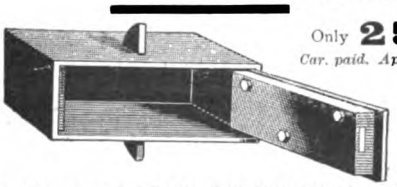

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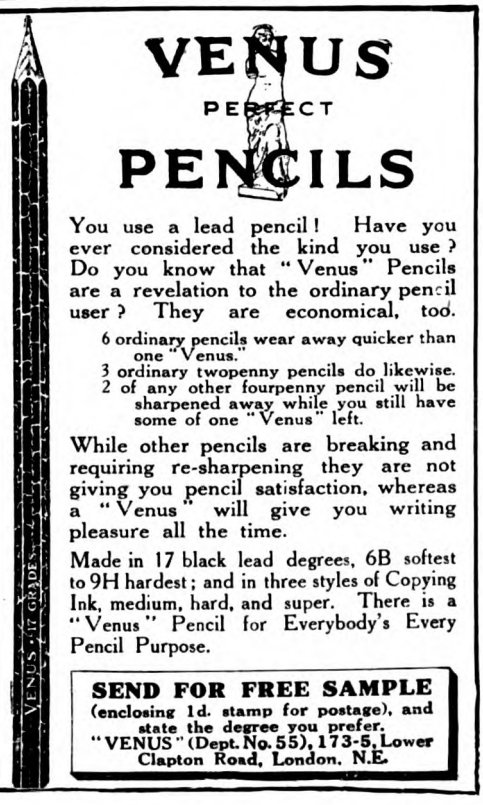

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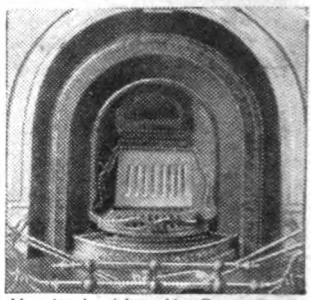

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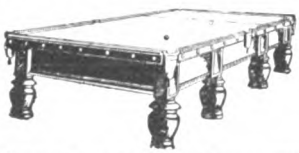

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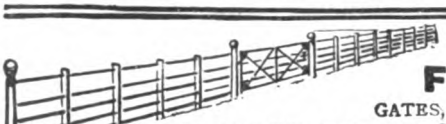

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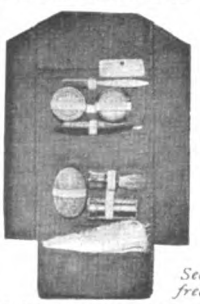

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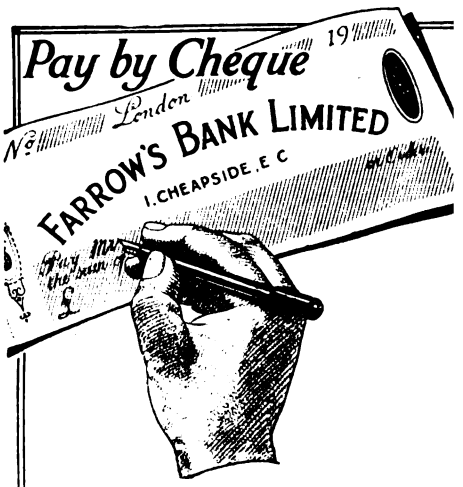

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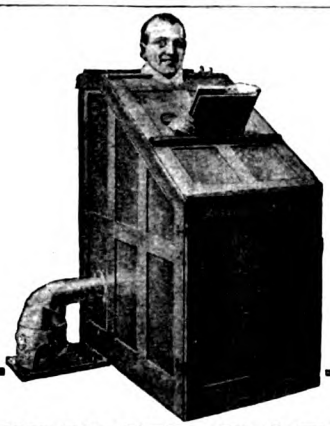

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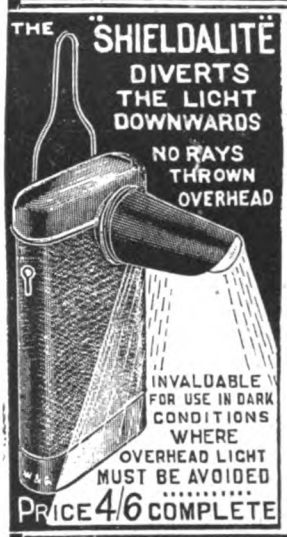

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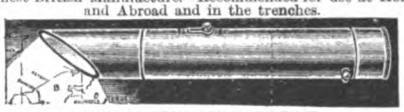

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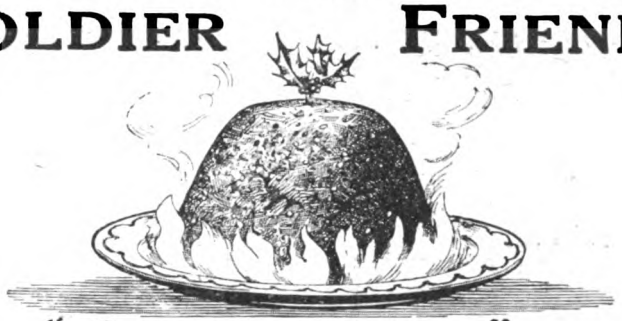

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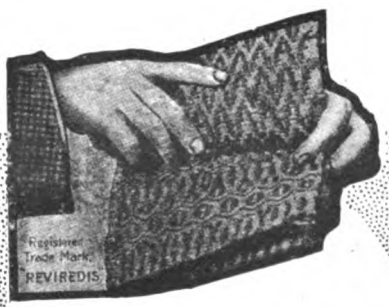

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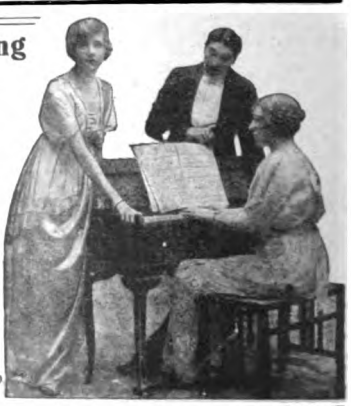

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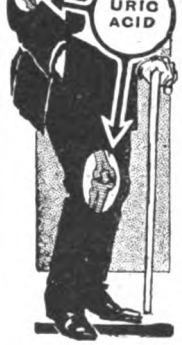

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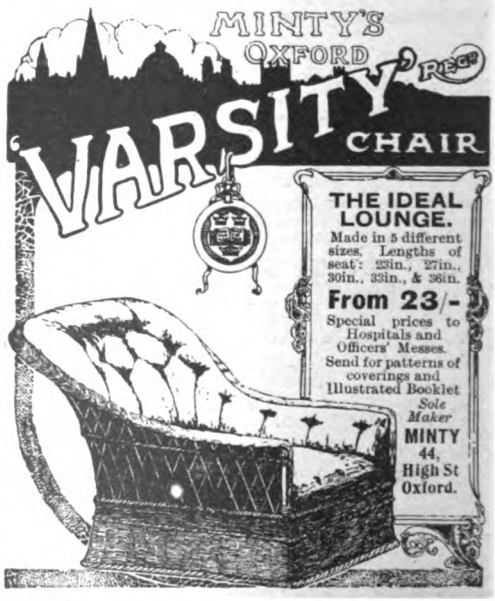

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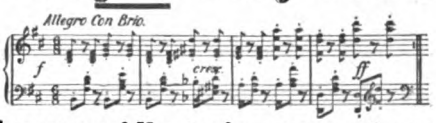

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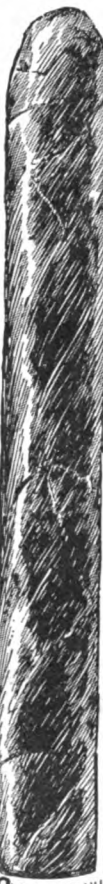

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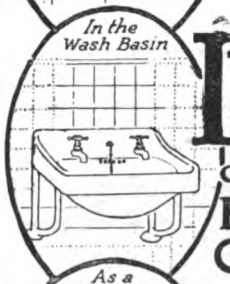

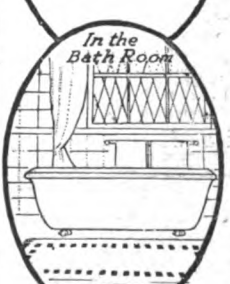

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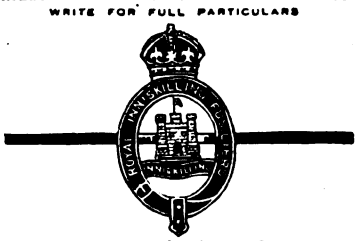

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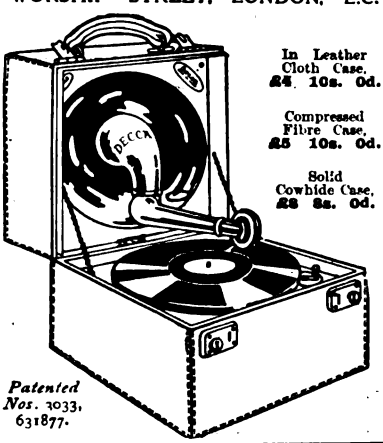

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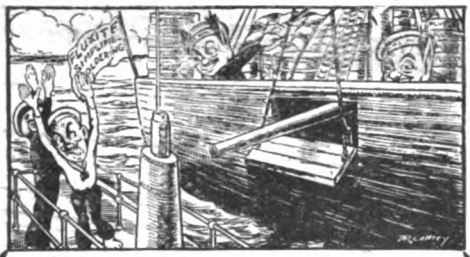

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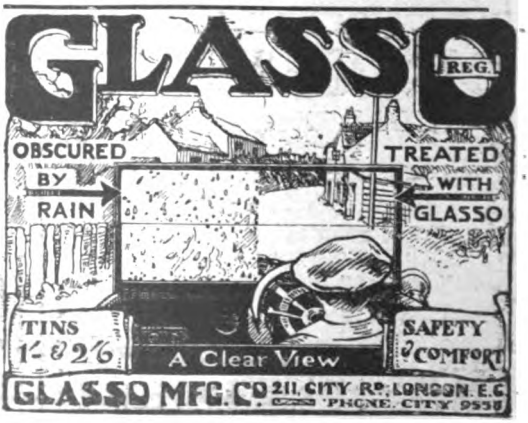

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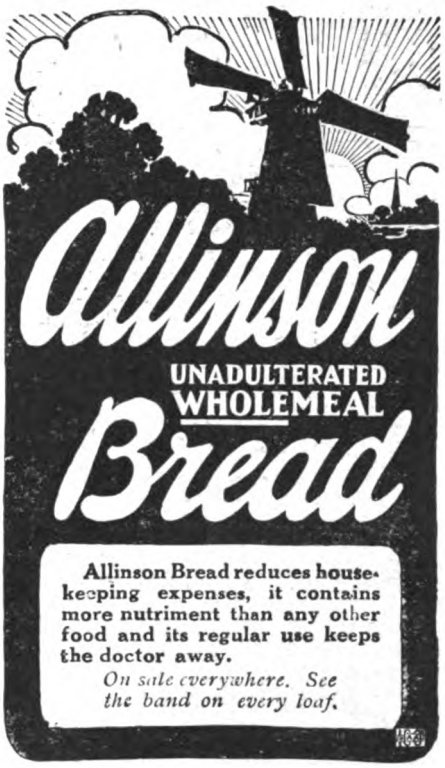

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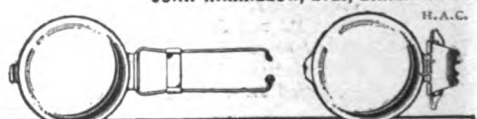

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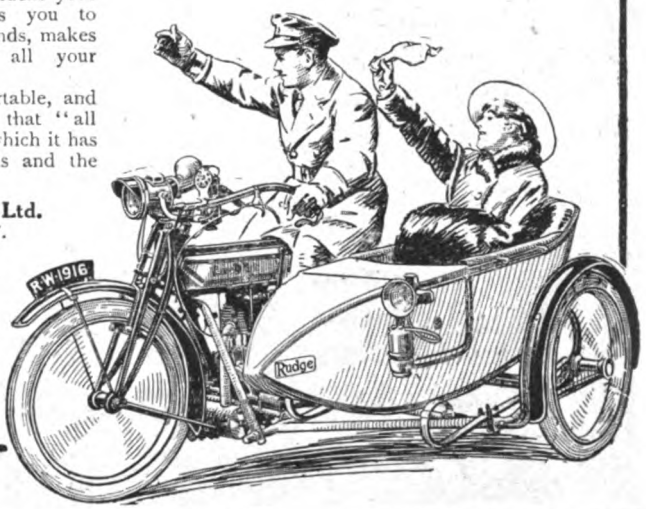

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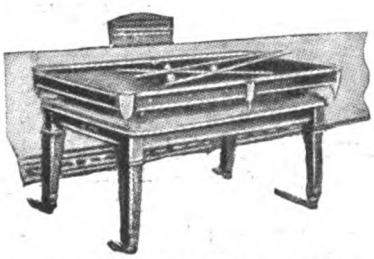

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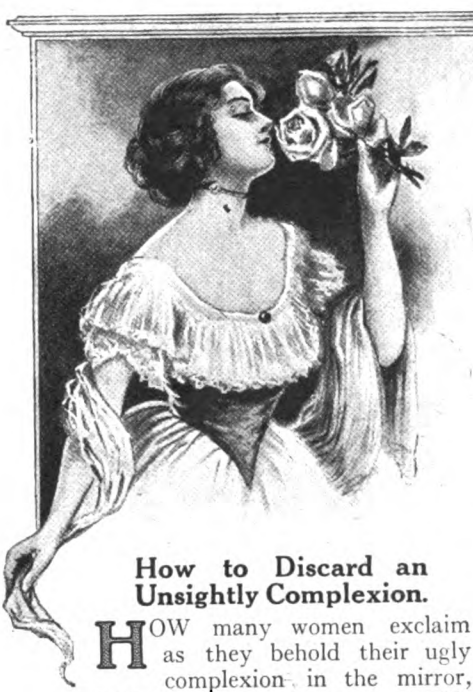

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BY MIMOSA

How to Discard an Unsightly Complexion.

HOW many women exclaim as they behold their ugly complexion in the mirror, "If I could only tear off this old skin!" and, do you know, it is now possible to do that very thing? Not to actually remove the entire skin all of a sudden; that would be too heroic a method, and painful, too, I imagine. The worn-out cuticle comes off in such tiny particles, and so gradually—requiring about ten days to complete the transformation—it doesn't hurt a bit. Day by day the beautiful complexion underneath comes forth. Marvellous! No matter how muddy, rough, blotchy or aged your complexion, you can surely discard it by this simple process. Just get some ordinary mercolised wax at your chemist's, apply nightly like cold cream, washing it off in the mornings.

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FEW people know that grey hair is not a necessary feature of age—that it can be avoided without resorting to hair dyes. A very old, home-made remedy will turn the hair back to a natural colour in a few days. It is only necessary to get from the chemist 2oz. of concentrate of tammalite and mix it with 3oz. of bay rum. Apply this simple lotion to the hair for a few nights with a small sponge and you will soon have the pleasure of seeing the greyness disappear. This recipe is perfectly harmless, is neither sticky nor greasy, and has given perfect satisfaction for many generations to those in possession of the secret.

A Strange Shampoo.

* * * I WAS much interested to learn from this young woman with the beautiful glossy hair that she never washes it with soap or artificial shampoo powders. Instead she makes her own shampoo by dissolving a teaspoonful of stallax granules in a cup of hot water. "I make my chemist get the stallax for me," said she. "It comes only in ½lb. sealed packages, enough to make up twenty-five or thirty individual shampoos, and it smells so good I could almost eat it." Certainly this little lady's hair did look wonderful, even if she has strange ideas of a shampoo. I am tempted to try the plan myself.

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HOW to permanently, not merely temporarily, remove a downy growth of disfiguring superfluous hair is what many women wish to know. It is a pity that it is not more generally known that pure powdered pheminol, obtainable from the chemist's, may be used for this purpose. It is applied directly to the objectionable hair. The recommended treatment not only instantly removes the hair, leaving no trace, but is designed also to kill the roots completely.

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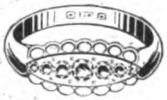

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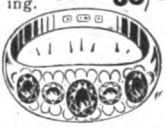

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"You use doilies — and *still* your table is beautiful and spotless. How do you do it?
"Why, it's very simple—just use Johnson's Prepared Wax."

JOHNSON'S Prepared Wax imparts a hard, dry, glasslike coating over the varnish, protecting it and adding years to its life and beauty. Hot dishes and liquids have no effect whatever on tables which have been polished with

JOHNSON'S PREPARED WAX

It never becomes soft or sticky in changeable weather or from the heat of the body —consequently it does not show finger prints and

It Cannot Gather Dust

Johnson's Prepared Wax cleans, polishes and finishes with one application. It gives Craftsman Furniture that soft artistic polish so appropriate to this style. It entirely removes the cloudiness from Mahogany, restoring its original gloss.

Every family has dozens of uses for Johnson's Prepared Wax. Keep a tin always on hand for polishing your

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Woodwork
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Furniture
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Leather Goods,
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Where surfaces are sticky, greasy or badly soiled, clean them first with Johnson's Cleaner —it will remove spots and stains that other cleaners won't affect

JOHNSON'S CLEANER

contains no grit or acid so it cannot scratch or injure the finest finish—simply cleans and prepares it for a polish with Johnson's Prepared Wax

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I enclose 6d. for trial tins each of Johnson's Prepared Wax and Johnson's Cleaner — sufficient for a good test.

Name .....

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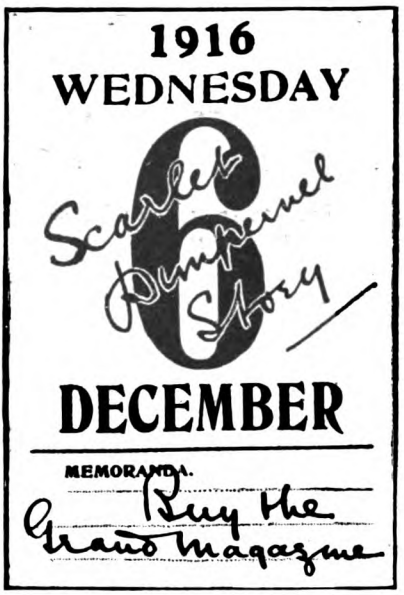

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GRAND Magazine

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LONDON'S LARGEST JEWELLERS

3 fine Sapphires surrounded by Diamonds in 18-ct. Gold mount **£10**

5 large Diamonds in carved Half-hoop mount **£12 10s**

Exquisite Diamond Cross-over Ring **5gns.**

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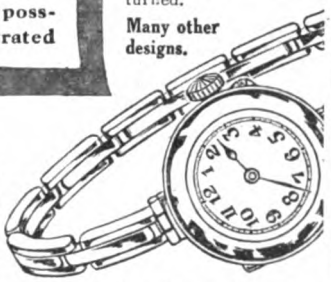
Lowest London Prices

will be more than ever appreciated by Gift Buyers who are anxious to make their Christmas outlay go as far as possible. A few typical bargains are illustrated

Handsome Gold Locket, richly chased and engine-turned. **15/6**

Many other designs.



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Gold Necklet and Pendant of exclusive design, mounted with Pearls and Peridots.

Hundreds of designs to choose from.

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Cheltenham : 121, High Street.
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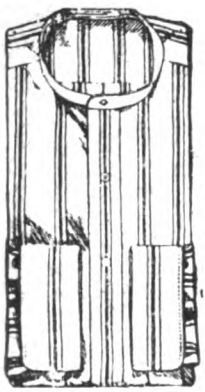
Business by Post Robbed of all Risks.

SAMUELS',

The Largest Mail Order Hosiers, make this Proposal.

You will receive back all money paid for any garment which you return. No question will be raised. Our goods should be of sufficient value to sell themselves—if they do not we must maintain our reputation by repayment. We cannot afford a dissatisfied customer. **Everything sent carriage paid United Kingdom—carriage extra abroad.** Colonial enquiries receive our special attention. Our Catalogue contains many bargains; please write for it. Here are some of them:—



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Made in the very best materials, in handsome, fast colour designs, and cut by expert Shirt Tailors. We cannot produce a more beautiful garment.

5/9 each; **3** for **16/6**

When ordering, please state size of collar worn.

The "Strand" Sock.

When ordering state size of boot. (Black or Navy.)

They don't need darning, but will wear as long without coming into a hole as any socks at double the price. Specially made of fine all-wool unshrinkable cashmere, they are so soft and comfortable to the feet that walking becomes a pleasure. "Strand" Socks save trouble.

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When ordering state chest and waist measurement.

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5/9 per Suit; **3** Suits **16/6**

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Best Belfast Hemstitched Handkerchiefs, splendid specimens of the Handkerchief craft, **5/6** per dozen; worth **8/6**.

Buy a dozen, use one, and, if you do not consider it excellent value, keep it and return us the other eleven, and your 5/6 will be refunded.

£6 6s. OUTFIT OFFER.

For £6 6s. we will forward free, to any part of the World, 1 Best Quality Tailor-made Gent.'s Suit in Tweeds, Serges, or Vicuna; 3 Suits Pyjamas; 1 pair Braces; 6 Collars; 6 pairs "Strand" Socks, wool or cashmere; 1 tailor-made rain-proof Tweed Overcoat, very latest style and of best workmanship; 3 suits Underclothing (Pants and Vests), any weight; 6 Handkerchiefs, best Irish make; 3 Shirts (white or flannel).

WONDERFUL 40/- HOSIERY OUTFIT.

For **40/-** we send Goods usually retailing at **£3 10/-**.

3 Singlets, light, medium, or Winter weight.
3 Pants, light, medium, or Winter weight.
3 Ceylon or Oxford Tunic Shirts, in latest designs, or **3** best Belfast White Shirts.
6 Pairs Cashmere or Winter Half-Hose.
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Carriage paid all over the World. Any article of equal value can be substituted for another, such as shirts for singlets or singlets instead of pants.

FREE Catalogue, containing many hundreds of bargains, will show you the advantage of dealing with us. WRITE FOR IT TO-DAY.

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A handy vest pocket case containing a certain cure for constipation and the consequent headaches, loss of appetite, depression, etc.

Carry a box of Chocoloids about with you—it is neat and not bulky and as a specific it will prove invaluable. If you are a sedentary worker, a munition worker, a soldier or a sailor, you will at one time or another have a need for Chocoloids. Have a box against that day.

Sparkling eyes, clear skin, healthy appetite, and an abundance of good spirits are life's gift to those with pure blood.

Chocoloids

Regd.

The Cure for Constipation

purify the blood by promoting a natural and healthy habit. They bring back the elasticity and joyousness of youth. They strengthen the nerve system and increase the joy of living.

Chocoloids are entirely vegetable in character and are prepared by qualified Pharmacists under ideal laboratory conditions. They are eminently suitable for delicate constitutions, because, **though the effect is certain, it is not drastic.**

It should be particularly noted that the effect of a dose is **always the same**—a gentle, regular action which closely approximates to nature.

Get Chocoloids and have again the strength, vitality, and happiness which come from pure blood. Keep a box handy in the store cupboard, or carry one with you when travelling.

Send a tin to the Front

Chocoloids at the Front are a boon. They take the place of natural laxatives (vegetables, etc.), and they can easily be carried about in the pocket. Put a tin in your next parcel.

PRICES:
Per Box of **60** Tablets, usually sufficient to cure the most obstinate case **2/6**
SAMPLE BOX 1/3, containing **24 tablets.**
Chocoloids may be obtained from all Chemists, or post free from the makers.

Testing Sample Free

We are so certain of the efficiency of Chocoloids as a sure remedy for all cases of constipation and its attendant evils that we offer a Free Sample—sufficient to prove—on receipt of a postcard.

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From an actual Micro-photograph of the Bacillus Influenzæ — magnified 900 diameters—taken at the Runcorn Laboratories

This is a picture of your enemy——the Influenza Bacillus.

Bacteriologists to-day have enabled us to see and recognise many of the tiny organisms that make their attack on the human system by way of the mouth and throat.

To recognise our common enemy—to classify him—ascertain his habits and mode of attack—has been the aim of modern scientists; and in establishing precautions against these deadly micro-organisms, leading scientists recommend the use of—

EVANS' *Pastilles*

The effective *precautionary measure* against the Microbes of influenza, catarrh, diphtheria, pneumonia, etc.

Every man and woman needs these handy, easily-taken Pastilles—not only as a *cure* for sore throat, catarrh, loss of voice, etc., but also as a sound and definite precaution against the myriads of deadly microbes encountered in the day's work.

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Warning: See the raised bar.

Genuine Evans Pastilles can be recognised by the raised bar on each Pastille — which is registered.

Obtainable from all Chemists and Stores. **1/3**

Post Free Order a box at once for yourself or your soldier or sailor friend. In case of difficulty write now enclosing P.O. for 1/3—the Pastilles will be sent direct by return.

EVANS, SONS, LESCHER & WEBB, Ltd.,
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P 1/A

The Ideal Invalid Diet

THE ideal food in all cases where the digestion is feeble or disordered must provide complete nutrition, be easily and completely assimilated and absorbed, and be stimulating and strengthening to the weakened digestive system.

All these qualities are possessed by "OVALTINE" to a supreme degree. It is a highly concentrated extract of the vitalizing and building-up properties contained in Nature's Tonic Foods —Malt, Milk, and Eggs, and contains no drugs or chemicals.

The highest medical opinion agrees that the essential food elements are presented in scientifically correct proportions.

"OVALTINE" is super-nourishment. In convalescence it rapidly builds-up brain, nerve, and body. Taken last thing at night, it promotes quiet, refreshing sleep.

"OVALTINE" REPRESENTS THE HIGHEST FOOD VALUE IN THE MOST EASILY DIGESTED FORM.

"OVALTINE" makes a delicious beverage with an attractive flavour of which invalids seldom tire.

No fuss or trouble in making—merely add to warm milk or milk and water.

One Cupful of "OVALTINE" contains more nourishment than 7 Cupfuls of Cocoa 12 Cupfuls of Beef Extract, or 3 Eggs.

"OVALTINE" is made in England by British Labour under British Control.

OVALTINE

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Obtained from Chemists and Stores at 1/2, 2/-, & 3/6.
FREE TRIAL SAMPLE on receipt of 1d. stamp for postage.
A. WANDER, Ltd., 173, Cowcross St., London, E.C.
Works: King's Langley, Hertfordshire.

P150

Shade of Sir Walter:

"Chivalry's decay is nigh, for woman independent walks through mire, and mine immortal cloak no longer serves: her dainty feet protected pass through mire and mud, through hail and snow—when wearing 'Dri-ped.'"

DRI-PED Reg.d

THE SUPER-LEATHER FOR SOLES

Is double-wearing, absolutely waterproof, non-slipping, non-squeaking, light and flexible.

Get "Dri-ped" sole leather on all classes of boots and shoes, new or re-soled. See the Diamond Trade Mark in purple every few inches on each sole—without it, the leather's a substitute.

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There is Strength for both Body and Nerves in Sargol

The assurance that there is REAL health and strength for tired, exhausted nerves in Sargol has come as a veritable boon to thousands of men and women—in a crisis when their nerves have broken under the taxation of strenuous effort, debilitating illness or weakening worry.

There is no affliction that affects the nervous system that does not rob the sufferer of his strength. With the lowering of the nervous vitality there is a corresponding lowering of the physical forces. That is why work becomes an effort, and the lack of mental vigour so apparent to the sufferer's friends.

If you find yourself with shattered, weakened nerves—at a stage where work is driving effort—where you lack interest in things in which you formerly took pleasure—where strength is failing—where digestion is impaired—where you are irritable—you will do well to try the strength-giving, nerve-restoring Sargol treatment which has been so freely prescribed by thousands of Physicians in like cases.

Sargol is so carefully prepared that even the weakest stomach will quickly assimilate its strength and nerve-restoring properties. That is why it has been so successful in cases even where there was excessive weakness and why we have such faith that it will prove a boon to you. Start the Sargol treatment now, to-day, and let it lead you to that physical state of happiness which will make your life more enjoyable and more successful in every way.

Sargol is sold and recommended by such high-class firms as Boots' Cash Chemists, Harrods', Selfridge's, Taylor's Drug Stores, Lewis & Burrows, and Wm. Whiteley's. If you do not live near a dealer send 3/- direct to the

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It is the *works* that are all-important in a watch, and the works in my **50/-** Silver English Lever are equal to those in 18-ct. Lever watches at £20. Watch exchanged, or cash returned, if not approved.

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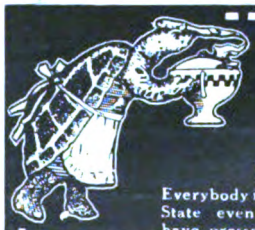

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5/- TREATMENT FREE

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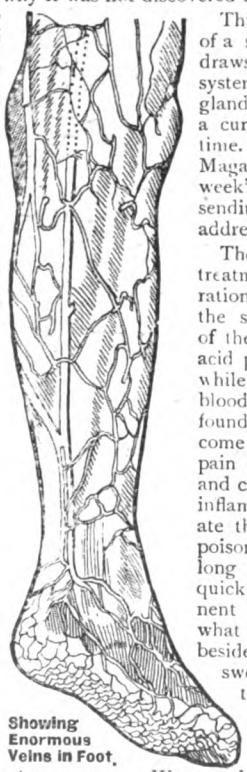

Showing Enormous Veins in Foot.

This new treatment consists of a special medicament which draws the uric acid from the system through the sweat glands of the foot, and creates a cure in the shortest possible time. Any reader of this Magazine will be sent a free week's treatment simply by sending in their name to the address given below.

The claims made for the treatment are indeed most rational. We all know that the sweat glands of the soles of the feet throw off more uric acid poisoning than any other, while the thousands of little blood vessels which are to be found in the foot quickly become irritated, resulting in pain to the rheumatic sufferer, and causing the foot to become inflamed and swollen. Alleviate this, extract the uric acid poisoning, and you will go a long way towards effecting a quick, positive, and permanent cure. This is exactly what this new treatment does; besides, through these very sweat glands, an antidote to the uric acid poisoning is introduced into the system quicker and more efficiently than by any other means. We are daily receiving testimonials from patients in all parts of the world.

Here is one:

Mr. W. CHAPLIN, of 19, Trap Lane, Ecclesall, Sheffield, writes: "Use my name in full where you like. Your Foot Drafts have cured me, and I shall proclaim it to everyone suffering from Rheumatism. I was 70 years on May 25th, 1916."

Every Rheumatic sufferer should certainly give this new treatment a trial, and all they have to do is to write to-day to R. A. Oliver, 1233, Eauclare House, Wine Office Court, London, E.C., and a complete 5s. treatment will be sent by return, free of cost. Applicants should enclose three penny stamps for postage.

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Convenient

Stick, bowl, or cake, whichever you prefer—each the best of its kind—each ensuring a slick, smooth shave—and it's British!

In cardboard boxes, 6d.; Sticks, 9d. and 1s.; in Bowls and Tins, 1s. Of all Chemists.

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Any tobacco can be used.

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Only weighs ½oz. Fits in Cigarette Case. LADIES can use it.

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Makes Standard Size Cigarettes, also 5½-inch long Cigarettes.

"VITA" CO. (Dept. 4), 30, Limehill Road, Tunbridge Wells.

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(Reg. No. 656710.)

Specially designed in our works by an English Mechanic. Differs entirely from all the cheap foreign-made articles so long foisted on the British public. **British from start to finish.** Design, Manufacture, and Workmanship. Machine-made throughout and interchangeable. Bolt action, quickly manipulated, great force and accuracy. Can scarcely be equalled as a recreation for in and outdoor sport; shoots darts, pellets, or shot. Guaranteed to outwear half a dozen of imported pistols, and to be the strongest Air Pistol ever made. Deeply plated and polished, packed in strong box, together with supply of Darts, Slugs, and Cleaning Implements, **12/6** each. Postage 6d. extra. **List free.** Sole Manufacturer:—

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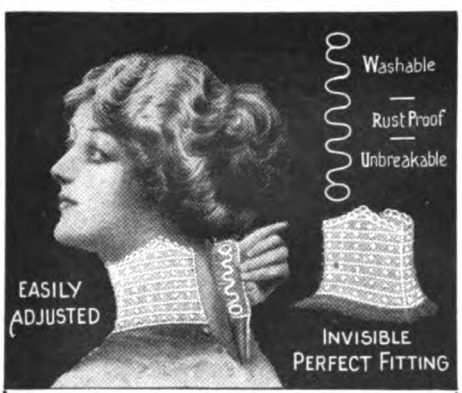

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They give with every movement of the head, and do not chafe the neck.

Made in Black or White in the following sizes:— 2, 2¼, 2½, 2¾, 3, 3¼, 3½, and 4 inch.

1/- per packet of 12. 3½d. per Card of 3.

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Send last season's Hat to be cleaned or dyed and altered to a fashionable model.

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Weatherproofs and Raincoats cleaned and re-proofed by our "Proof Positive Process."

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"Cards which enhance the pleasure of the game."

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Should a Child Have a Night Light? (No. 6)

Dr. LE GRAND KERR, in "The Care and Training of Children."

"FROM a knowledge of the immediate and remote effects of frightening a child I am assured that a large part of the self-consciousness, the introspection, the nerve exhaustion and hysteria of later childhood and adult life, had their beginnings in the repeated awakenings of fear in the young child."

Price's Night Lights

give a sense of security to nervous children and highly-strung adults.

CLARKE'S PYRAMIDS.
For Large Light and Heat. The only Lights suitable for use in
CLARKE'S PYRAMID NURSERY LAMP and FOOD WARMER.
ROYAL CASTLE or CHILDS'.
For Small Light. To burn in a saucer containing water.
SOLD EVERYWHERE.

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must wear "healthy" Corsets, and the "Natural Ease" Corset is the most healthy of all. Every wearer says so. While moulding the figure to the most delicate lines of feminine grace, they vastly improve the health.

THE CORSET OF HEALTH

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Postage abroad extra.

Complete with Special Detachable Suspenders.

Stocked in all sizes from 20 to 30. Made in finest quality Drill.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST.

No bones or steels to drag, hurt, or break.

No lacing at the back.

Made of strong, durable drill of finest quality, with corded supports and special suspenders, fastened at side, but detachable for washing.

It is laced at the sides with elastic cord to expand freely when breathing.

It is fitted with adjustable shoulder straps and body buttons to carry underclothing.

It has a short (9 inch) busk in front which ensures a perfect shape, and is fastened at the top and bottom with non-rusting Hooks and Eyes.

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